SEPTEMBER 1965

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY, NUMBER THREE

"ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT"
Reflections on the New York Times
GEORGE LICHTHEIM

Presenting the Bible: David Daiches

LETTER FROM HAVANA: Peter Schmid

SENTIMENTALIZING THE JEWS: Robert Alter

CCNY—A Memoir: Meyer Liben

A MAJOR DIN TORAH: Isaac Bashevis Singer

THE RULE OF LAW IN THE SOUTH: Haywood Burns

SEX UNDER SOCIALISM: Ernst Pawel

BOOKS IN REVIEW

J. G. Weightman Roger Owen
Andrew Hacker Paul Johnson Paul Winter

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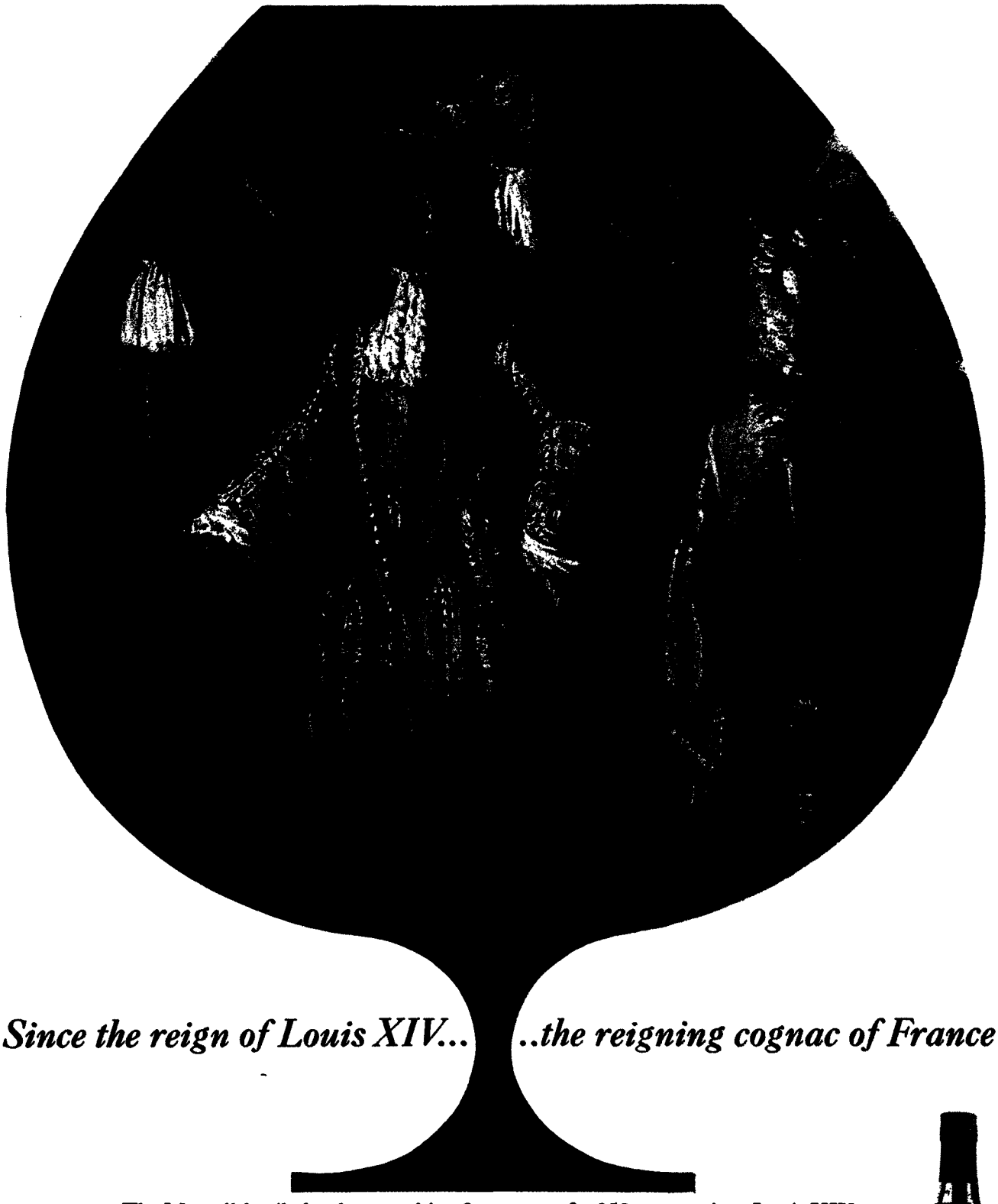

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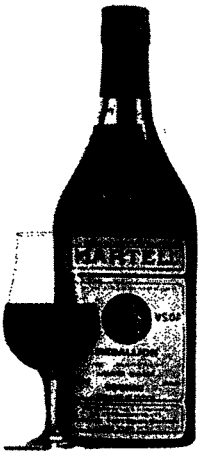

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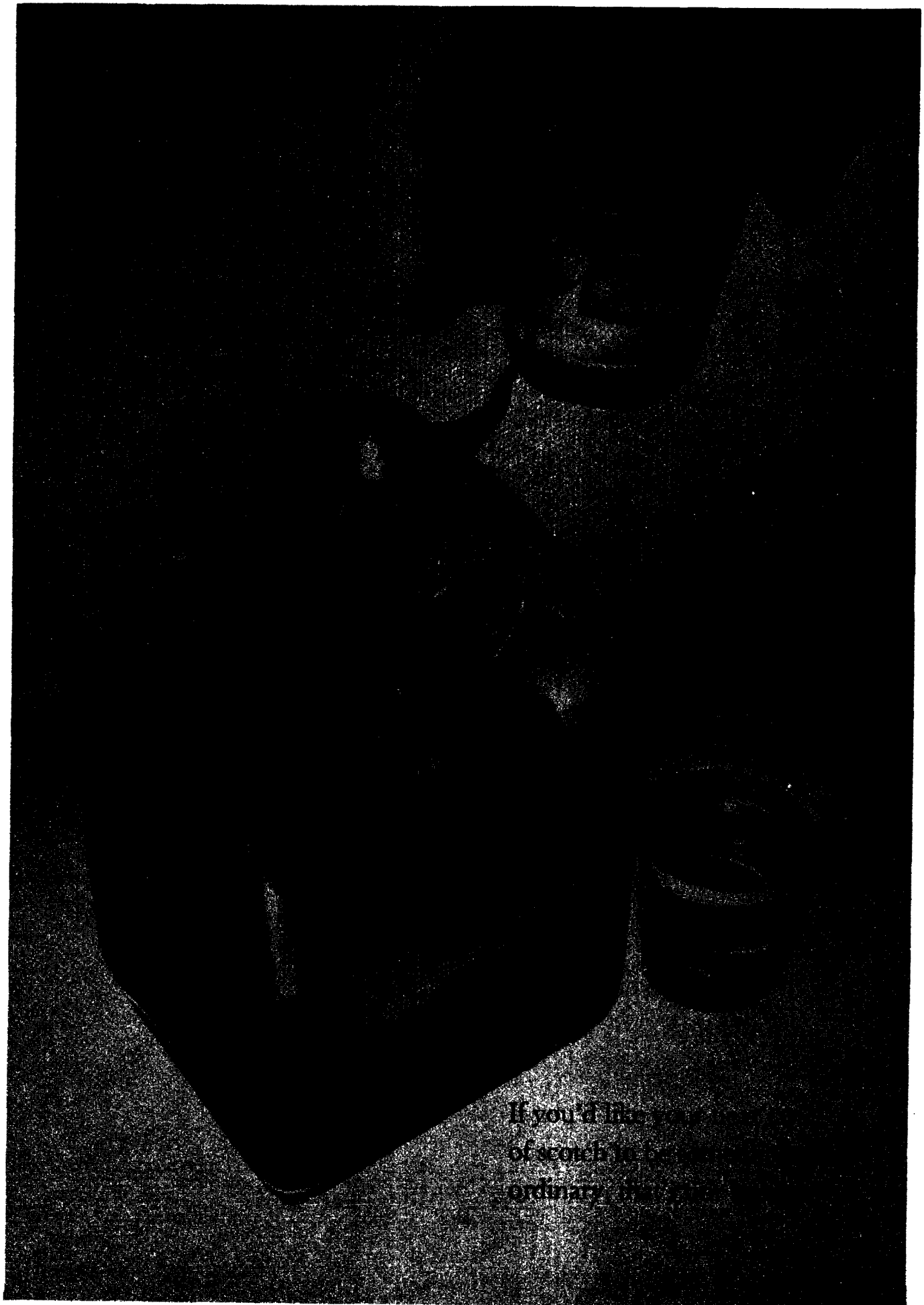
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Commentary

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NUMBER 3
VOLUME 40

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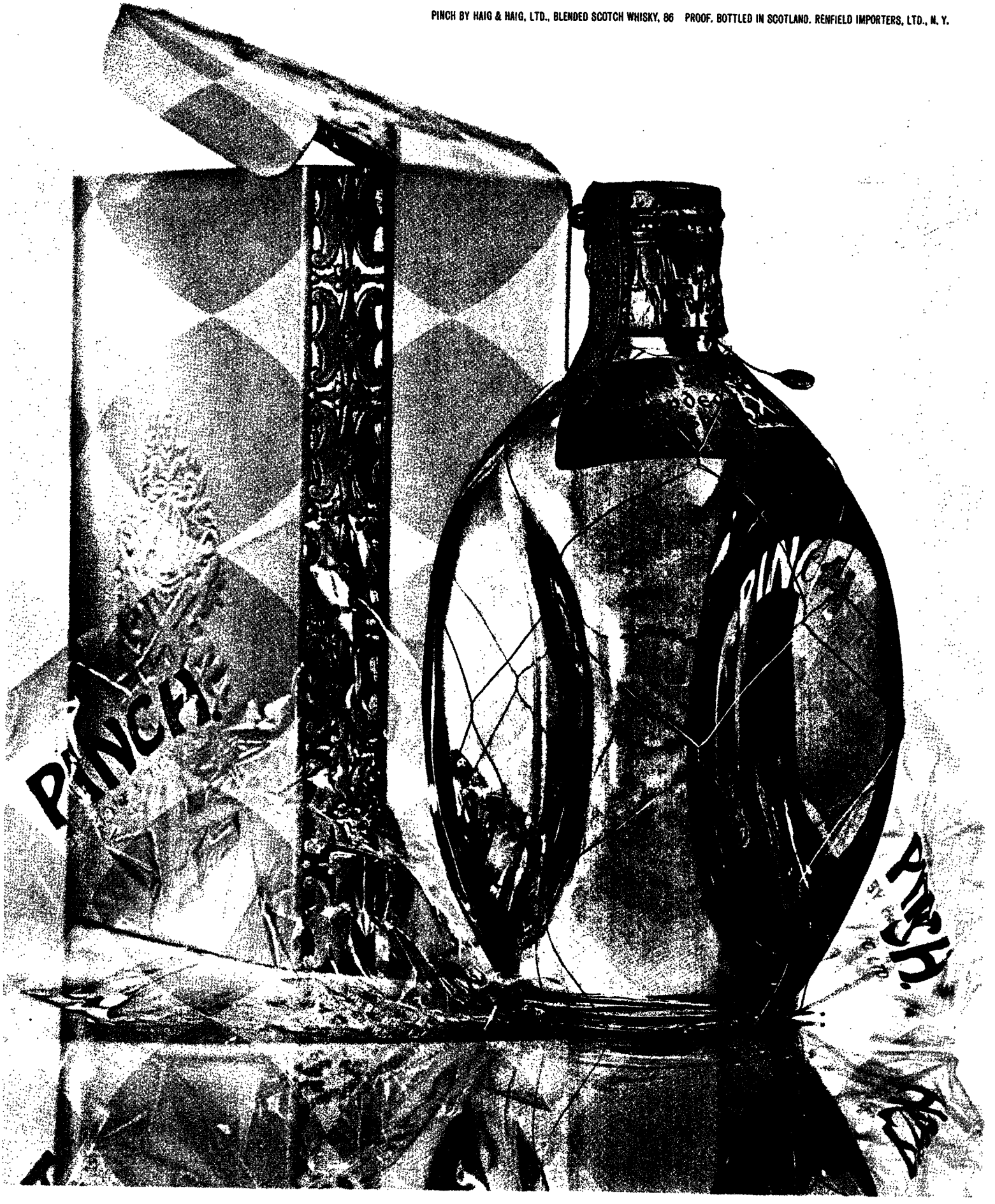

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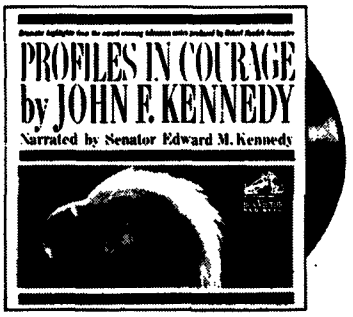

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THE STORM by Pierre Auguste Cot

HERE ARE TWO PAINTINGS, both of the same subject, and both discussed in the first portfolio of the Metropolitan Museum's Seminars in Art program. The one at left was held in the highest critical esteem in the 1880's. Today it would be dismissed by most critics as mawkishly sentimental. The other painting was damned as degenerate in the early part of this century. Now it is considered to be one of the finest examples of expressionist art. If you were unexpectedly asked to judge these paintings, would you be able to express a well-reasoned opinion? Or would you, like so many people, be tongue-tied, fearful of exposing ignorance by making any comment at all? A surprising number of otherwise cultivated persons have a blind spot so far as painting is concerned. Visiting a museum, they stand before a famous work of art and see nothing beyond what the painting is "about"—and frequently they are unsure even of that.

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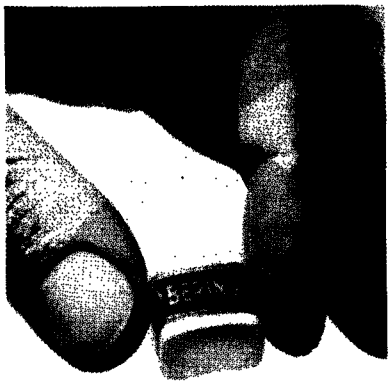

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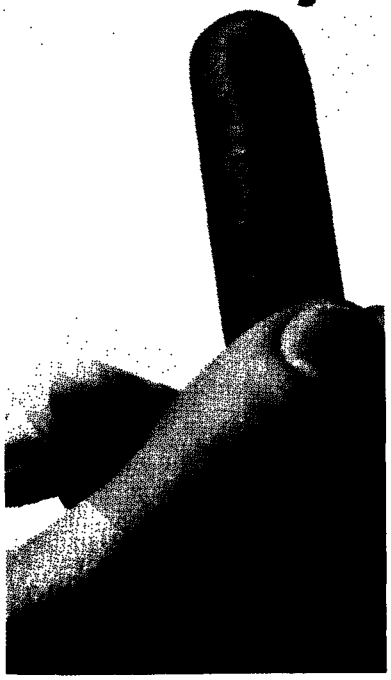

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Chords & Discords

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Goldman's attack on B. H. Haggin in his review of *Music Observed* [May] . . . can be of no consequence to readers who know Haggin's work. What is deplorable is the possibility that such a piece might deter those not yet so fortunate from coming to know this towering critic and writer of our day. . . . Haggin's whole work is the real refutation of the review. Nevertheless, one cannot refrain from attempting to clear some rather foul air.

Mr. Goldman attacks Haggin's indictment (*American Scholar*, Summer, 1962) of the musicologist Alfred Einstein on the basis of evidence supplied by "some nameless informant." However, page 238 of *Music Observed*, which contains the indictment referred to, also contains a footnote reference to pages 107-8, where the "nameless informant," Charles B. Farrell, is named. The reviewer goes on to assert: "and there is no indication that Haggin subjected this evidence to even the slightest check." In actuality, pages 107-8 quote the Einstein statement about Boccherini, . . . followed by a citation from Charles B. Farrell's authority, Piquot's book on Boccherini. Here, Haggin states, "was assembled all the available documentary material, including Boccherini's own autograph catalogue. And this book—which one would expect Einstein to know, but which he evidently did not know—gives the date of the composition of Boccherini's first set of quintets as 1771, and the date of publication as 1774—which means that his quintets couldn't have been famous in the late 1760's and known to Mozart in 1770." What further verification was needed?

Or, Mr. Goldman attacks Haggin for the alleged conversion in the mid-50's of "his weekly page of forthright comment on the current scene into a sophisticated record-rating service." The facts are that Haggin was the *Nation*'s record critic through all the years in which he was its music critic. When he left the *Nation* in 1957 he continued to write on records for the *New Republic* and the *Yale Review*, and continued to write on the musical scene, and with no change in quality, regularly in *Hudson Review* and occasionally elsewhere. And the reviewer must have been aware of this, because some of the recent material is in *Music Observed*.

Again, the reviewer finds Haggin guilty of "an aesthetic prudery so extreme that it confuses emotion with sentimentality"—this of the critic who has written . . . of Mozart: . . . "These are the unobtrusive, effortless, inevitable manifestations of extraordinary human powers; and under the impact of their succession it is sometimes difficult to keep from crying out in excitement and delight." And of the critic who has written, . . . after a detailed musical description of the jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke: "I find these terms inadequate, but I have no better ones now for what, in Beiderbecke's first phrase in *I'm Coming Virginia*, sends chills down my spine and brings tears to my eyes," the reviewer states that he has "ignored jazz."

But these . . . flagrant . . . factual misrepresentations are part of a larger falsification. . . . Whatever qualities one finds in Haggin's work of the 30's and 40's are to be found in *Music Observed*. . . . And these qualities include not only the incisive style and illumination of object . . . but the wonder of *Music Observed* as a book. It is not merely a collection of individual pieces, but it takes its place as one of the outstanding essays on criticism in English literature. The author's intense and complete involvement gives the book the kind of excitement one finds only in the great writers, an excitement emanating from the book's joy in things good, its indignation at bad things, and its wrath at evil. . . . It makes *Music Observed*, to paraphrase Haggin on Toscanini's economy of gesture in conducting, an intensely moving moral experience.

Eli Katell

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

What Albert Goldman offered as a review of B. H. Haggin's *Music Observed* . . . was an attack on a different book and a

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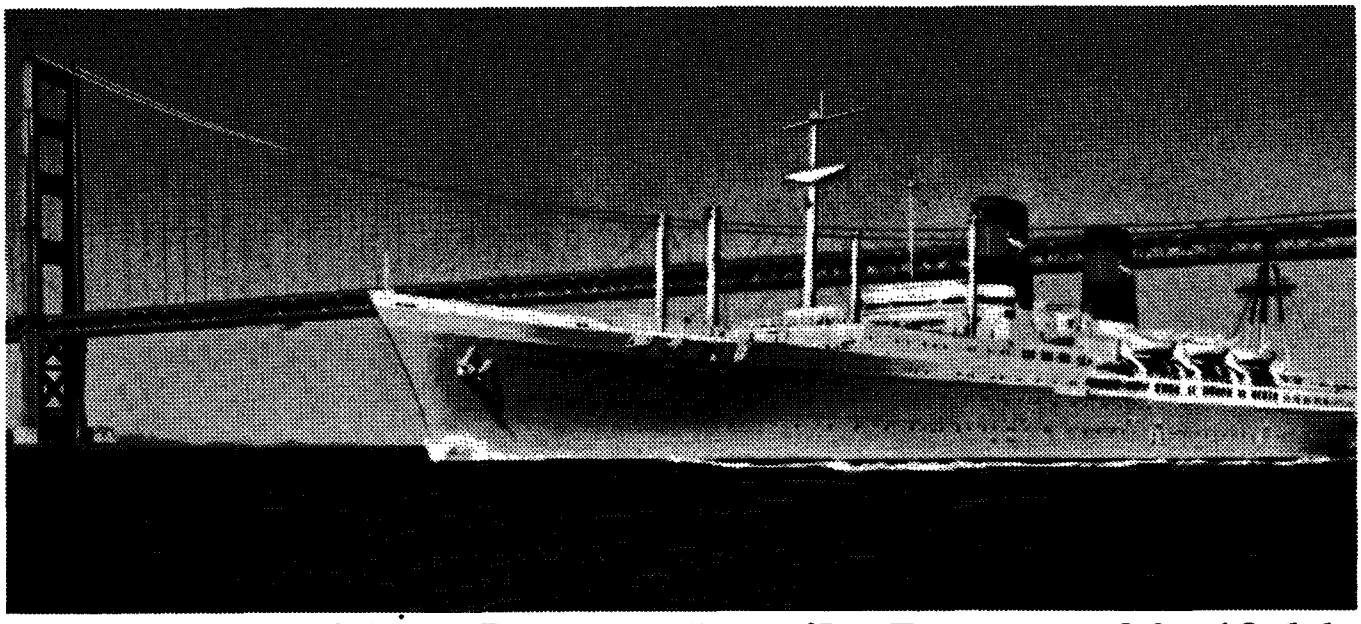

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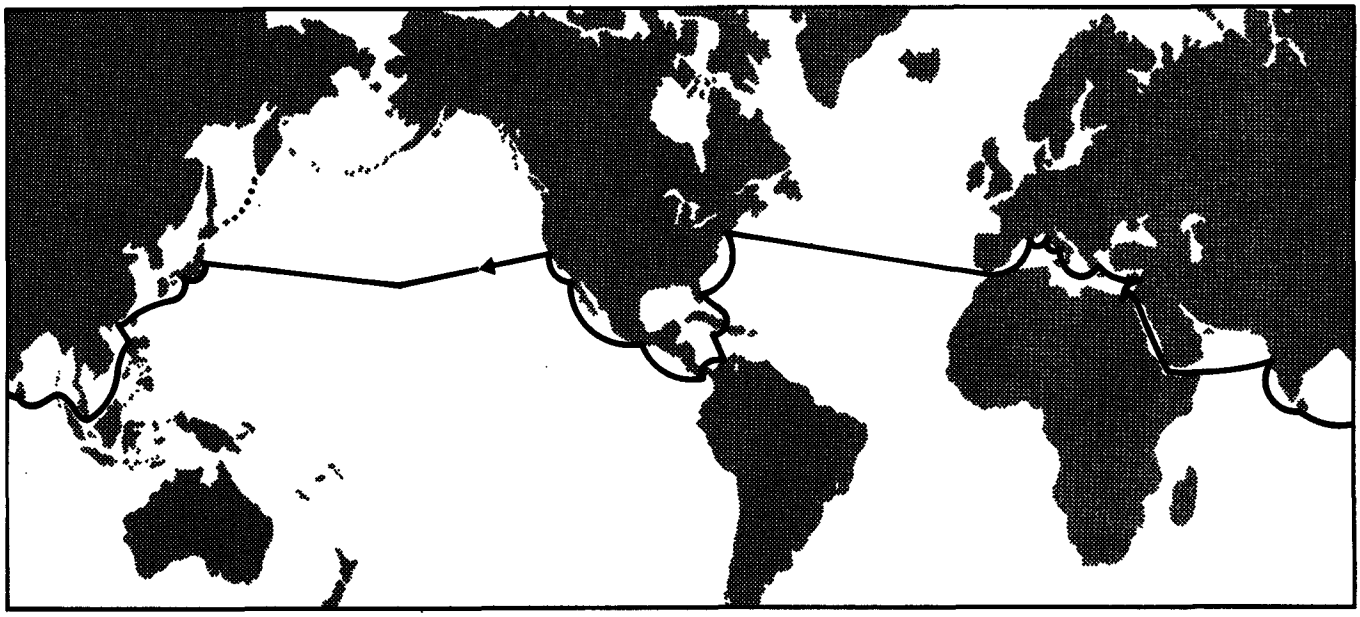

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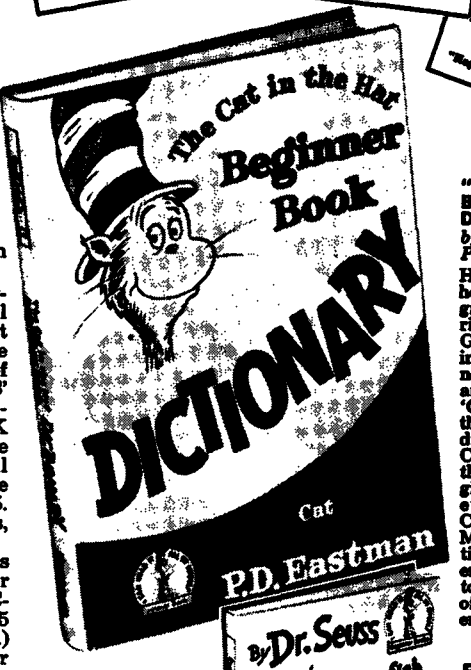

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different critic, both apparently made up for his purpose by Mr. Goldman. I have not the space to correct all its ugly misstatements of fact, but I would like to set the record straight on a few.

Mr. Goldman writes: "Haggin has drastically subordinated the creative to the performance values of music, restricted even his criticism of performance to the standard repertoire and the well established musicians, turned his back on modern music, ignored jazz (except to use it as a stalking horse for attacking other critics), and finally, has responded with suspicion and hostility to every sort of historical, cultural or aesthetic generalization."

As a reader of Haggin's writing for almost twenty-five years, I can state categorically that all but one of these assertions are untrue:

(1) Haggin has written about music itself . . . not only in his occasional magazine criticism, but in his books devoted entirely to music, e.g., *The Listener's Musical Companion*. . . . In *Music Observed*, too, I find numerous observations on music, among them . . . comments on Britten (pp. 265-6), Bellini (pp. 281-2), Mussorgsky (pp. 131-4; pp. 175-6), Mozart (pp. 45-7), and Verdi (pp. 288-9). And to illustrate Haggin's ability to write movingly, as well as informatively, of the most valuable in music, there is his discussion (on pp. 46-7) of that exalted and overpowering experience that occurs at the close of the last act of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

(2) When Haggin has written about performance, it has been . . . in relation to the music, that is, how the structure and expressive meaning of the music have come through in, e.g., Schubert's *B Flat Sonata* as played by Horowitz, or . . . Schnabel; in Beethoven's *Ninth* as directed by Furtwängler, or as played under Toscanini. This is something which the ordinary newspaper reviewer does not do as well if at all, merely reporting the passing show of performer personalities.

(3) *Music in the Nation*, which Mr. Goldman calls "vastly superior" to *Music Observed*, contains several of Haggin's reviews of the not well-established pianist Webster Aitken, in one of which he discusses works of Charles Ives and Elliot Carter which Aitken played. That book contains Haggin's writing on the then not yet well-established Leonard Bernstein; not only on his conducting but on the novelties by Stravinsky, Piston, Copland, and others on Bernstein's programs. It also contains his reviews of the first New York performances of Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony* and Prokofiev's *Eighth Piano Sonata*. *Music Observed* contains writing about newcomers like Van Cliburn and Glenn Gould, about Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Copland's *The Tender Land*, Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, Ives's *Second Symphony* and Britten's *War Requiem*. In addition, I remember his writing about many of the young pianists (to limit myself only to them in accordance with Mr. Goldman's example) such as Fleisher, Johannesen, Rosen, Katin, Graffman, and Pollini.

(4) Haggin has listened to a great deal of modern music and has reported what he has liked by Berg, Stravinsky, . . . Prokofiev, . . . Hindemith, and he has reported what he has not liked by these composers and by Schönberg, Webern, Bartok, and Shostakovich.

(5) *Music in the Nation* contains a number of pieces on jazz, which Haggin has written about throughout his career with relish, and very much for its own sake. As Mr. Goldman must be aware, *The Listener's Musical Companion* contains an entire chapter on jazz, and *Music Observed* contains two pieces on jazz, out of the large number found in the body of his criticism. . . .

Mr. Goldman is correct in pointing out Haggin's distaste for historical, cultural, and aesthetic generalization in music criticism, . . . the reason for Haggin's distaste being that such generalization sheds more darkness than light. How right Haggin is in this distaste is demonstrated by Mr. Goldman, who has a capacity for glib and inaccurate generalization, but not the ear or taste for hearing or judging a piece of music or a performance correctly. . . . An example is his distorted idea of Toscanini's performances, which makes it impossible for him to reconcile Haggin's approval of Schnabel with his approval of Toscanini. But someone capable of hearing the true nature of Toscanini's performances . . . will agree with Haggin . . . that the two musicians had different ways of achieving the same result of heightened illumination of the piece of music. Mr. Goldman is simply a critic with no ear and taste disagreeing with a critic who has

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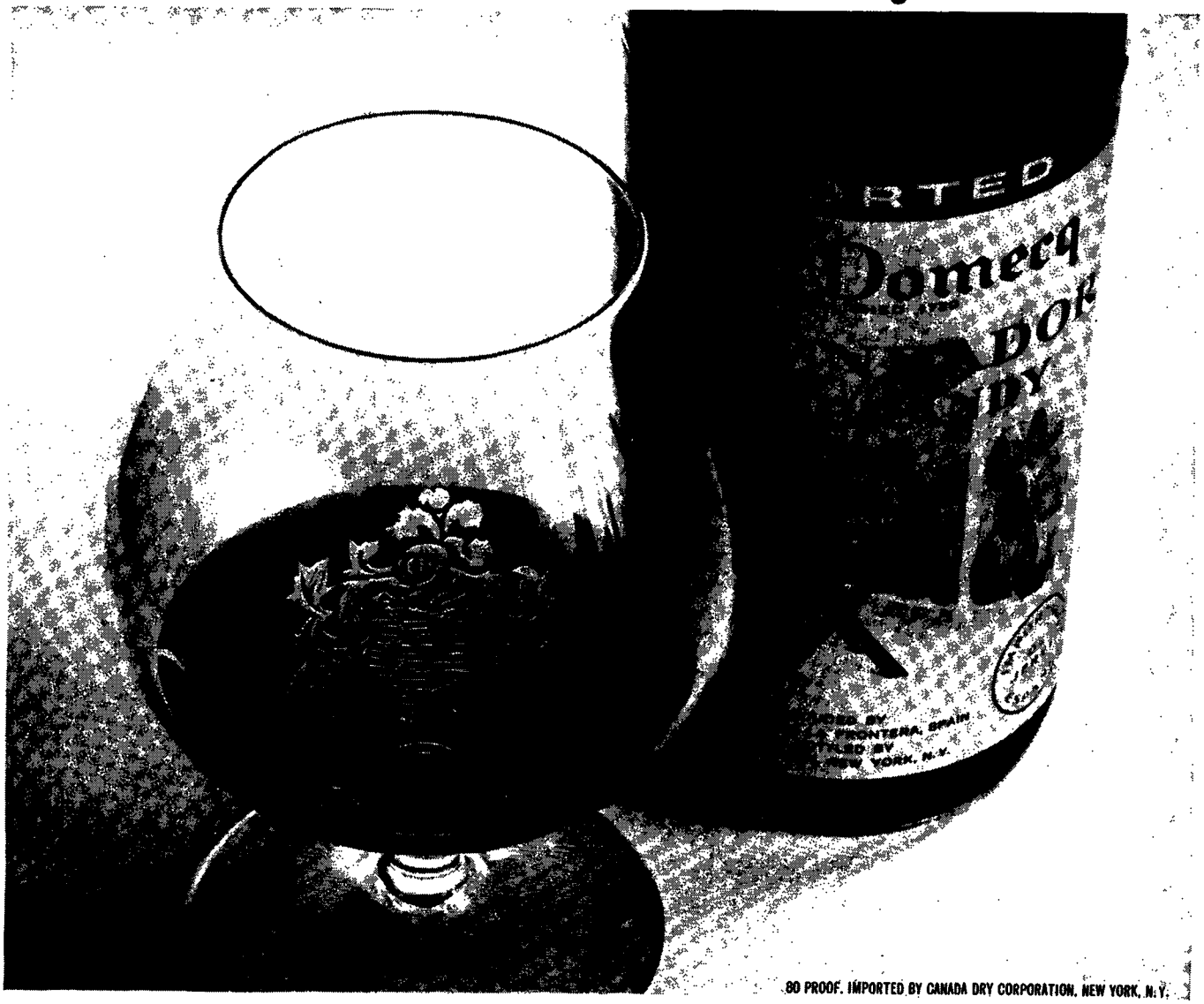

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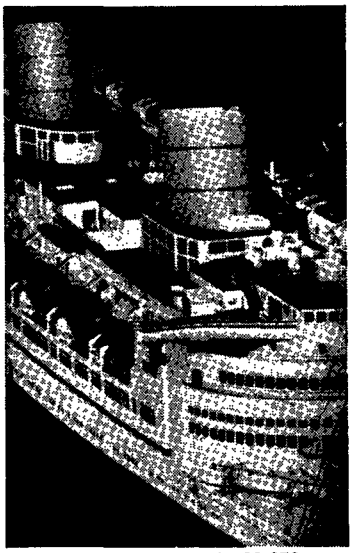

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both. This he has a right to do; but he is not satisfied with merely expressing his differences of opinion with Haggin. Instead he attacks Haggin's writing with statements which from his reading he knows are untrue.

"Confronted with a generation of talented, refined young performers like Van Cliburn, Leon Fleisher, and others, . . ." Mr. Goldman writes, . . . "Haggin can do no more than commend the young men and swiftly change the subject." But this is simply untrue. The articles in *Music Observed* (pp. 214-16, 263-4) are only two instances of how Haggin has repeatedly and eloquently insisted on the excellence of Cliburn's playing of Beethoven, Mozart, and Schumann, where other critics have consigned Cliburn to the status of a flashy virtuoso who is beyond his depth when he ventures beyond Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. . . . Mr. Goldman's statement also omits all of Haggin's even more enthusiastic writing . . . about another young musician, Glenn Gould. . . .

HAGGIN is a preserving force by virtue of his intense commitment and courage, as well as his taste, which put him in a lonely position. . . . This commitment is evident not only in his passionate advocacy of what he finds great in music and performance, but in his anger at falsifications of the great . . . . *Music Observed* testifies that his commitment has not waned, nor has his power. I therefore wish that COMMENTARY had done him justice with its review. In the weeks since I first read Mr. Goldman's unscrupulous attack, my anger at him for what he wrote, and my disappointment with COMMENTARY for lending it respectability, have not diminished.

RAOUL GERSTEN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . A great deal of B. H. Haggin's critical writing has taken the form of record reviews, as would seem natural in an age when records are the usual means whereby the public becomes acquainted with music and its performers. But his writing has not been limited to discussions of records, and it is unjust of Goldman to refer to Haggin's "recent lean years," and to say that his mind "has lost its vitality," without discussing, for example, the quarterly accounts of the New York musical scene in the *Hudson Review*, where Haggin has been doing some of his best writing. . . . Goldman says Haggin's articles "more and more turn away from the artists and issues of the present, . . ." but Haggin has discussed, in . . . recent articles, new works staged by the New York City Ballet, Leinsdorf's conducting of the Boston Symphony, the most recent changes in the Philharmonic Hall acoustics, Nureyev, and Stravinsky's new recording of *The Rake's Progress*.

GOLDMAN says further that Haggin's book "has not been very enthusiastically received," but Richard Poirier, in the New York Herald Tribune *Book Week* of December 27, 1964, spoke of him as one of the great critics of the century, and Michael Steinberg, in the *New York Review of Books* of November 5, 1964 called him the best music critic now writing. . . .

"No major critic," Goldman continues, "has ever been guilty of so many sins of omission." He says that Haggin has "ignored jazz," for instance, but in five of Haggin's eight books there are separate discussions of jazz and jazz musicians, including, in three of the five, extensive lists of recordings, many of them praised in the highest terms. Goldman says Haggin has "restricted even his criticism of performance to . . . well-established musicians," but Haggin is the only critic I know of to describe, for example, the performances of the extraordinary violinist Gerard Poulet. He has also written of the pianists Adam Harasiewicz and Webster Aitken; he praised Eileen Farrell's singing of the Wesendonck songs long before she became a public sensation with her Medea; he praised Eleanor Steber's singing of Mozart when *High-Fidelity* said she should never have attempted it (though that magazine called her, about ten years later, one of the great Mozart singers of the age). . . . "Haggin has drastically subordinated the creative to the performance values of music," Goldman continues . . . [then] he contradicts himself by saying that one of Haggin's great services to music was to criticize the "laxities and excesses" of performers like Horowitz and Stokowski. Finally, in the list of omissions, Goldman mentions modern music, but it appears that what he really has in mind is not an omission but

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a difference of opinion, for he praises Haggin for the latter's condemnation of Menotti, Barber, Bernstein, Blitzstein, Moore, Harris, and Kurt Weill, but criticizes him for his dislike of Schönberg, Bartok, Hindemith, and Berg. There are twelve names there—which hardly constitutes an "omission."

Though Goldman thinks Haggin was correct, in the late 30's and the 40's, to praise the "classically disciplined type of performance over the traditional romantic virtuoso," he says that the former performance style is "becoming dull and mannered" . . . as if fine musicianship were only an episode in the history of taste and you should change your mind now and again so as to avoid sins of "omission." . . .

This does not seem to me to be the kind of review that should be directed at the writing of a man whose career, as even his critics admit, has been so distinguished by integrity.

LEONARD CONVERSI
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is to be hoped that Albert Goldman's trenchant review . . . will start a badly needed debate on how America's ailing musical life can be made hale. Mr. Haggin is merely a symptom of the impoverished state of serious music criticism in America today. He has built his reputation by exploiting his own . . . narrowmindedness. . . . Mr. Goldman is right to remind us that the critic who can so resolutely close his mind to the music of his time has abandoned his responsibility to composer and audience alike. The good critic . . . is receptive to the new, argues with himself about it, seeks its essence, its merits and flaws, and *then* judges it with charitable severity. It is only through such intelligent dissent and praise that the critic can quicken that dialogue with composers, critics, and listeners about values, ideas, styles that is a sign of a vigorous, ongoing culture. Mr. Haggin, with his dogmatic rejection of modern music . . . has chosen the way of the Philistine; . . . Mr. Goldman's judicious assessment of his work hopefully points the way to a revival of the synoptic musical criticism so ably practiced by Paul Rosenfeld and Virgil Thomson.

HERBERT LEIBOWITZ
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . While one cannot deny Mr. Goldman his opinions, one can disagree with him, and I do—as a spokesman for thousands of readers who have appreciated B. H. Haggin for years precisely for his incomparable standards. I know of no writer on music who has written more truthfully and objectively about what he heard than B. H. Haggin. This does not mean that I have agreed with him on every point. . . . However, he is the only writer I have respected for more than three decades, and whose current work I still enjoy. . . . If we are not able to see in the pages of *Music Observed* the operation of a clear and penetrating musical mind—so much the worse for us. . . .

BAIRD HASTINGS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is unfortunate that Albert Goldman, in seeking to dissipate the halo that he believes has been placed by "literary intellectuals" above the head of B. H. Haggin, chose to revive . . . the Toscanini controversy of another era, and with all its clichés intact. . . .

Some of the distortions Goldman mentions are indeed to be heard in the Toscanini performances on records, but they are the exception, not the rule. As for the "pinched tone," it is true that Toscanini was guilty of approving records that sound terrible—and Haggin discusses this point in his *Conversations with Toscanini*—but it was the RCA Victor engineers, not the conductor, who put that sound on discs. . . .

The real difference between what Haggin does and what Goldman would like him to do is that Haggin restricts himself to descriptions and opinions that the reader may check against his own experience, while Goldman prefers such terms as "passion, poetic imagination, and the power of personal communication." There are such qualities, I suppose, but they are hard to identify. I would attribute them, for example, to Toscanini's performances; Mr. Goldman would not. How much better is Haggin's narrow but precise critical vocabulary.

BERNARD ELEVITCH
Bogota, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Goldman begins his disingenuous discussion of B. H. Haggin's music criticism by claiming

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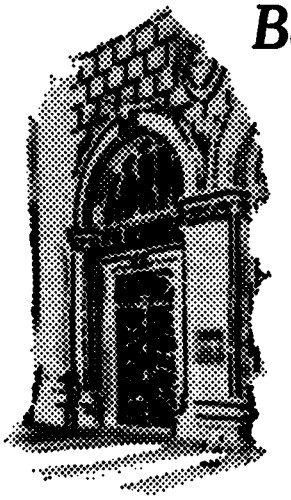

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that Haggin has "abandoned" his essential function as a music critic and has chosen instead to operate only a "sophisticated record-rating service." "Abandoned" is Mr. Goldman's curious way of talking about the fact that Haggin can no longer *find* an outlet for the weekly commentary on the general musical scene that used to appear in the *Nation*; Mr. Goldman's way of dealing with another fact—that Haggin's current column in the *Hudson Review* does consist of some of Haggin's richest extended discussions of live performances and of new works of art—is not to mention it. Having thus manufactured Haggin's willful abdication from his duty, Mr. Goldman feels "disgruntled" and regretful about it, for Haggin used to be our "last distinguished music journalist." But a few paragraphs later, when Mr. Goldman's thinking-machine swings into really high gear, we realize that this "lost" distinction of Haggin's must have been a pretty mysterious thing, since it was apparently always derived from false and harmful standards: Mr. Goldman has nothing to feel disgruntled about, since he thinks Haggin was always a bad critic.

Among the many naïve and confused charges that Mr. Goldman brings against Haggin, the most electrifying is that he has never been interested in the "meaning," the "poetry," the expressivity of music, but only in patterns of pure sound. Mr. Goldman builds up this charge from the facts that Haggin has an intense admiration for Toscanini and that he has often used the phrase "plastic continuity" to distinguish the greatest musical performances. In Mr. Goldman's view "plastic continuity" has been for Haggin a blinding obsession; he has followed Toscanini's lead in "ruthlessly" subordinating "the poetic aspect of music to the plastic" and has thereby been trying to roll music back to what it was before the "expressive geniuses," Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, "finally succeeded in infusing sound with meaning." (No meaning in Lassus? Byrd? Monteverdi? Purcell?) Mr. Goldman links this regressive tendency in Haggin with the works of Balanchine and with Haggin's admiration for them, and he ends up by dramatically dooming Haggin (and presumably Balanchine and Toscanini too) to liquidation at the end of a thrilling "crisis of taste" which is evidently happening *right now* and is going

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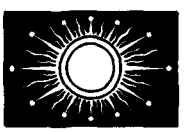

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to restore an interest in expressivity, meaning, and poetry in place of the obsession with the plastic qualities of pure music- and dance-making that are the only things Haggin enjoys.

Against this weird nonsense, here is Haggin writing about Callas in 1962 (*Music Observed,* p. 232): "the delivery of melody that was made affecting by the strangely beautiful color of her lower notes, musically distinguished by her sense for continuity and shape of phrase, and eloquent by her powers of dramatic expressiveness." Haggin goes on, in the same piece from the *Hudson Review,* to speak of Sutherland's merits but also of her important defect: "in this lower range she does a lot of singing in which the drab color, a low volume level, and pathetic inflection produce a succession of mournful moans—this sometimes when the words are about joy and happiness." The man who wrote these words is interested simply and directly (too simply and directly for Mr. Goldman, maybe) in expressivity, poetry, and meaning in music.

There are countless other examples of this interest, but it is Haggin's writing about Callas, Glenn Gould, and Nureyev that most brilliantly exposes Mr. Goldman's contention as the trumped-up thing it is. The ballyhoo about these superb and superbly expressive artists led many if not most critics into a petulant refusal to be "wowed" by them. Haggin's habit (found inadequate by Mr. Goldman) of "attentively" listening to and looking at each performance in order to render an "unsystematized verdict" led him to warm and illuminating praise not only of the plastic continuity in these artists' performances but also of their powers of dramatic expressivity. He looked at what was in front of him and reported what was there; his report is valuable because of his insight but also because of his disciplined honesty. Mr. Goldman's report on Haggin, lacking both qualities, is worthless.

ROBERT GARIS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Faith & Reason

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of my book, *Principles of the Jewish Faith* [May], Chaim Potok states that while I make reason the test of the relevance of Maimonides's principles for the 20th century, I seem to make up the rules of what is reasonable as I go along or to shift arbitrarily back and forth among various kinds of reason. In support, he gives three examples. First, after admitting that the traditional proofs for God's existence have no demonstrative power, I argue nevertheless that they are valuable as "indications." Secondly, by rejecting the naturalist position because it fails to satisfy the religious mind I seem to appeal to aesthetic "reasons." Thirdly, in rejecting Alexander's concept of emergent Deity I abandon reason altogether and fall back on faith.

With regard to the first example, the difference between demonstrative proof and "indications" is to my mind perfectly clear and reasonable, hardly deserving Rabbi Potok's description of it as "rhetorical utility." The argument that religious naturalism fails to satisfy the religious mind Rabbi Potok dubs "aesthetic," whereas my contention is that the naturalistic theory is *unreasonable* since it fails to do justice to the phenomena of the religious mind. As for Rabbi Potok's third example, anyone who takes the trouble to read the book will see that I subject Alexander's view to criticism and reject it on grounds of reason.

Potok also finds me guilty of persistent sidestepping of major issues, which he lists, failing to observe that my book does, in fact, deal with practically every item in his list. For instance, I have tried to examine in detail the question: "Can anything at all be said about the Ultimate Mystery?" (pp. 66-68 and the whole of Chapter 4). Nor can I agree that my version of the "Middle Way" is merely a matter of "personal aesthetics" (your reviewer is inordinately fond of this latter word, using it in a most imprecise way). The substitution of the idea of revelation *through* a people for that of revelation *to* a people in no way involves a surrender to individualism or subjectivity.

My distinction between God's goodness as a belief which cannot be contradicted by the facts and fundamentalism which can be so contradicted, Potok calls "a bizarre game with words." I fail utterly to see this. The whole point of the distinction is that the believer in God's goodness does not deny the facts. He walks in faith that the facts are not incompatible with God's goodness. The fundamen-

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The Scholar

Scholarship has always played a leading role in the Jewish ethic, but even in that tradition Michael Heilprin's scholarly attainments were extraordinary.

Born in Russia in 1823, Heilprin emigrated to Hungary and became a fighter for freedom in the 1848 revolution. When the revolution was suppressed, he was forced to flee and emigrated to the United States.

While earning a scant living as a teacher, Heilprin made the acquaintance of the editors of Appleton's *New American Cyclopedia*. Impressed by his learning, his photographic memory and his knowledge of 12 languages, they offered him the job of editor. In addition to writing many of the leading articles for the Cyclopedia, Heilprin revised and edited all historical, geographical and biographical items, an incredible feat when contrasted with the staffs of editors and specialists compiling modern encyclopedias.

Heilprin also became an editor of *The Nation*. He was the author of *The Historical Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews*. A passionate advocate of liberty, he became an outspoken foe of slavery. In this connection, he wrote scholarly articles refuting the view that slavery was justified by the Old Testament.

When, after the pogroms of 1880, thousands of Russian Jews emigrated, the scholar became an organizer. Heilprin established Jewish agricultural colonies in New Jersey as well as in Kansas, Oregon and the Dakotas. Largely through his efforts the Hebrew Emigrant Society came into being.

The outstanding non-theological Jewish scholar in America in the nineteenth century, Michael Heilprin died in 1892.

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talist invokes his faith to deny the facts.

Finally, Potok gives us a picture of up-to-date American Jewish theologians who long ago have gone beyond the struggle to recognize modern biblical criticism now engaging some of us in Anglo-Jewry. The little knowledge I have of the American Jewish scene makes me question this reading of your situation. I have read many American Jewish theological writings, produced particularly, but not exclusively, by the Orthodox camp, which are totally committed to the fundamentalist position. I am unabashed that your reviewer detects an "archaic quality" in my book. For the book deals with Judaism and Judaism is a very old faith.

(Rabbi) Louis Jacobs
London, England

To the Editor of Commentary:

Chaim Potok writes that "Rabbi Jacobs's efforts mark the beginning of English Jewry's encounter with modern thought." Rabbi Jacobs is in fact neither the first nor only current English rabbi to undertake this task. Rabbi H. M. Loewe, Claude Montefiore's collaborator, was more radical than Rabbi Jacobs in his acceptance of the higher criticism. . . . Chief Rabbi J. H. Hertz accepted biological evolution, thought it compatible with Judaism and said so often in print. . . . He had excellent company. His great . . . contemporary, Rabbi Kuk, lauded the evolutionary hypothesis. . . . Rabbi I. Epstein more recently (1954) resubmitted the monotheistic idea to powerful reductive analysis. . . . Each of these men managed to keep on good terms, to say the least, with the British Orthodox Establishment. The attempt to reconcile reason with tradition by the British rabbinate is, in fact, as old as Haham David Nieto's celebrated sermon of 1703-4, if not older. . . .

Rabbi Jacobs is an apologist for tradition; he is not attempting to construct a natural theology. His rejection of Alexander's emergent Deity on doctrinal grounds is therefore not unfair. He does not argue that Alexander's thesis is incorrect, only that it disagrees with normative Judaism. Rabbi Jacobs's necessarily personal opinion as to what is normative may be incorrect, but it is not unfair.

And incidentally, Alexander's thesis is by no means wholly unknown to Judaism. I, for one, think it close to the central doctrine of the Lurianic Kabbala. Late strata in the Babylonian Talmud in particular skirt the notion of an incomplete, less than omniscient Godhead. . . . These ideas have, in turn, many old rabbinic, if not biblical, precursors.

I am somewhat bemused to see Rabbi Jacobs's adoption of Frankel's Middle Way called "inconsistent and antiquated" by the editor of *Conservative Judaism*. (This is a compressed but, I think, accurate statement of Rabbi Potok's position.) Perhaps Rabbi Jacobs is inconsistent, but is Frankel really antiquated? If so, then Schechter, his disciple, is antiquated also, and *Conservative Judaism* as well. . . . How does one avoid being antiquated? I think Solomon Schechter tried to answer that question in the introduction to the first series of *Studies in Judaism* . . . and throughout *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* when he, expressly following Frankel, contended that rabbinic legislation had saved Judaism from rigidity. He taught that the oral tradition had lightened the burdens of the written law. Biblical religion in this view, untended by rabbinic Judaism, would have been inflexible, Schechter being quite opposed to the earlier American Reform view that the written word liberated, while rabbinic law enslaved. Tradition was Judaism's self-correcting and updating mechanism. Or is my understanding of Schechter mistaken?

Rabbi Potok asks if an anchoring in provisional absolutes can "be accomplished in a manner that will not violate the canons of rationality?" Since when are the canons of rationality absolute? Contemporary science is hardly irrational, but mathematical physics since Clerk Maxwell and the philosophy of science at least since Poincaré have expressly worked within provisional boundaries. . . . Attempts at reconciling reason and religion, and they are legion, have always had something strained about them. But for that matter, empirical science and reason have at times been incompatible. Seldom has that incompatibility been as great as it is in our own day.

(Rabbi) Frank Abarbanell
Evanston, Illinois

Rabbi Potok writes:

Rabbi Abarbanell misses the point. Louis Jacobs stands at the head of a movement that has arisen out of England's Orthodox Judaism. As such, he differs from the

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Van Gogh is probably the most widely known victim of this situation. The celebrated American painter, John Sloan, once offered at the peak of his creative career to trade all his paintings for a steady $100 each week—with no takers. The history of great art is filled with similar victims.

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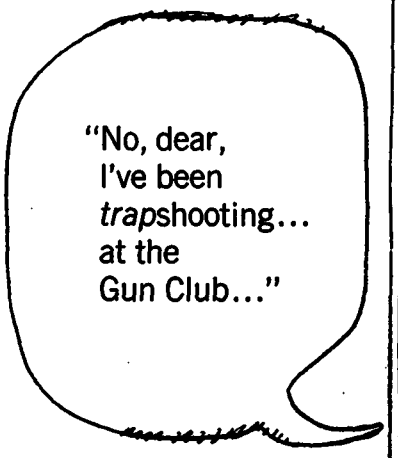

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intellectuals and liberals mentioned by Rabbi Abarbanell, for he represents a *communal* encounter with modernism.

Rabbi Abarbanell's attempt at compression results in a serious case of theological bends. It is Rabbi Jacobs's sudden discovery of the validity of scientific biblical criticism that I regard as outdated. Frankel and Schechter are still valuable today as foundations upon which one can build a theology relevant to contemporary problems. One who adopts them *in toto*, however, is simply duplicating them; he is addressing himself not to our time, but to theirs. This is the major fault of Rabbi Jacobs's position *vis-à-vis* the contemporary American scene. In no way, however, is this to be construed as a disparagement of the intrinsic worth of the contributions of Frankel and Schechter, or of the efforts of Rabbi Jacobs on behalf of today's Jewry in England.

As for Rabbi Jacobs, he misses a point in logic. A purported demonstrative proof that has been invalidated enters the null class *qua* demonstrative proof and cannot be used to indicate anything, for it indicates everything. Its use is therefore emotive or rhetorical.

The naturalist does indeed account for the phenomena of the religious mind (see, for example, Sidney Hook's *In Quest of Being*). But he will not ontologize, whereas the religionist will. Between the two there exists no argument of fact that will convince anyone of the complete justification of either position who is not already convinced before he even enters the discussion.

The clinching argument used by Rabbi Jacobs against Alexander is precisely as stated in my review. Rabbi Abarbanell appears to have read Jacobs on this matter exactly as I have. Thus my argument against Rabbi Jacobs's three different uses of "reason" stands.

How revelation *through* a people rather than *to* a people avoids leading to the problem of subjectivity remains a mystery to me. A revelation that enters the stream of history becomes subject to the changing processes of history. Such a view of revelation immediately involves us in the problem of determining what criteria are to be employed in evaluating which elements of the evolving tradition are and are not rooted in the original revelation. The implications of this situation are not examined by Rabbi Jacobs. They could well lead to a religion of "personal aesthetics," a term which is clearly explained in my review.

The believer in God's goodness *does* deny the facts when he continues to believe in God's goodness in spite of the *fact* of Auschwitz. Can Auschwitz be, to the human mind, anything other than brute, senseless evil? It is this fact that is denied by one who continues to assert God's total goodness. Rabbi Jacobs may argue that such an assertion of absolute evil is not a statement of fact but a reading of history, and history has secrets which are not known to us. But an opponent of Bible criticism will argue (and, indeed, does) that the Bible has secrets which, were they known to us, would do away with the questions asked by Bible scholars. By virtue of what criteria does Rabbi Jacobs invoke his faith in the area of God's goodness and not in the area of fundamentalist revelation?

Finally, Judaism is indeed a very old faith; but it must not be an antiquated faith. The problems facing Judaism today are altogether new. It is these problems and their implications that I do not find discussed fully in Rabbi Jacobs's book. But this is not to deny the intrinsic scholarly value of Rabbi Jacobs's efforts. It is more a statement of hope that in his future works the really serious contemporary theological problems will be treated by him in depth.

Arms & Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

Speaking for the Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America, I would like to commend Walter Z. Laqueur for his excellent article, "Bonn, Cairo, Jerusalem: The Triple Crisis" [May]. However, one correction with reference to the author's description of our position would seem to be in order.

Mr. Laqueur says:

> . . . if Israel made an arms deal with Bonn, it was mainly because of American and British reluctance (or even refusal) to give arms to Israel themselves. In the circumstances, the protests of American Jewish War Veterans or of the British Board of Deputies—not to mention those who declared a private boycott on German goods—though well meant, were at least partly misplaced. It is more awkward to protest against one's own gov-

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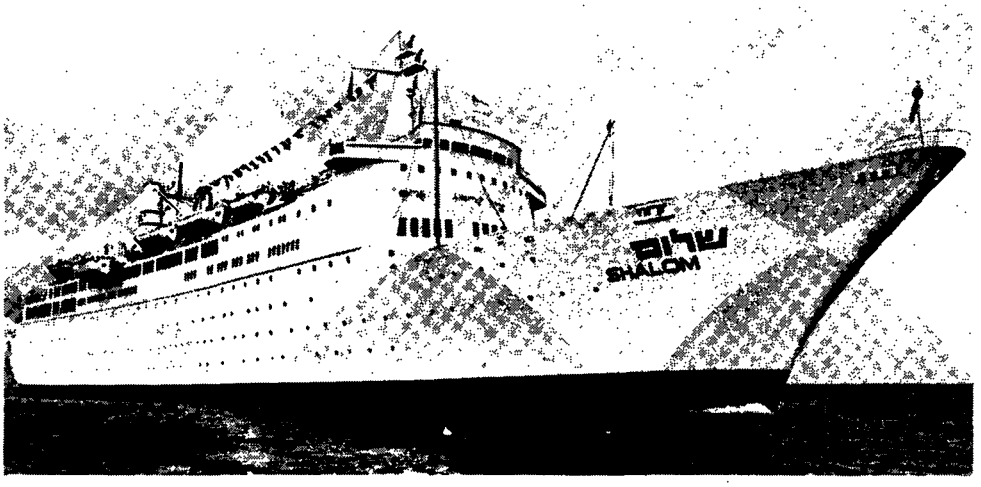

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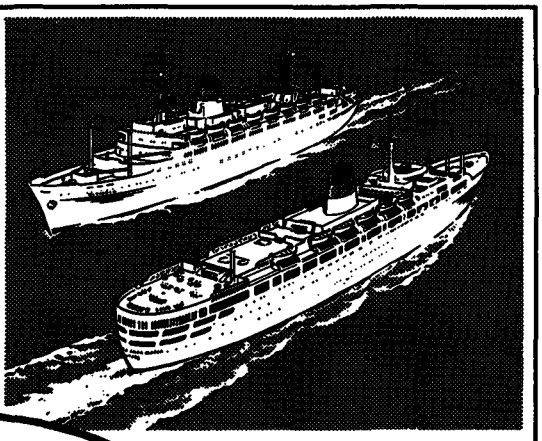

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ernment than against the Germans. . . .

The Jewish War Veterans did in fact publicly and vehemently urge our government to supply Israel with defensive arms to maintain a balance of military strength in the Middle East, as a deterrent to aggression and war.

We strongly criticized our own State Department tactics and policies that led to devious deals to arm Israel against the Egyptian-Soviet buildup, surreptitiously and through third parties (England, Canada, France, and finally West Germany).

It was the JWV that pointed forthrightly to the deterrent advantages (as in the case of American shipments of Hawk ground-to-air missiles to Israel) of *public* shipments of arms in implementation of American foreign policy, as expressed by our last three Presidents.

The JWV protests referred to by Mr. Laqueur consisted of strongly worded full-page advertisements in the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post* and were part of a sustained public campaign of press releases, speeches, resolutions, and even picketing and demonstration, expressing protest against Nazi rocket scientists arming Nasser, West German reluctance to extend the statute of limitations, and the West German unilateral cancellation of the arms for Israel. . . .

MONROE R. SHEINBERG
National Executive Director
Jewish War Veterans
of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Jews & Americans

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Irving Malin's *Jews and Americans* [June] George P. Elliott makes a nasty crack about Hadassah, equating it with "good-hearted dumpy complacency." I am a member of Hadassah, but I am not dumpy and at the moment I don't feel very good-hearted either. Why is it that people concerned with the arts make it a point of honor to indicate their contempt for women's organizations? I'll bet that Mr. Elliott, if questioned, would loudly proclaim his respect for womankind in general, for the right of women to choose occupations fitted to their own circumstances and abilities, and maybe even admit the need for medical and vocational work in Israel. But, if he has thought about

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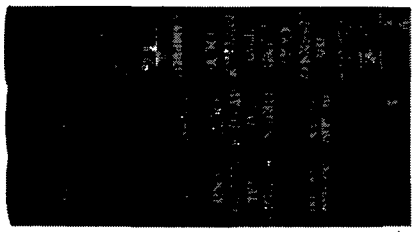

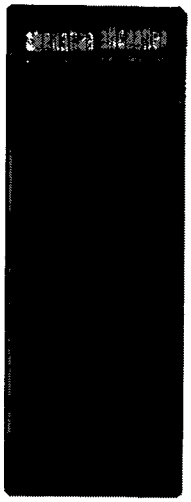

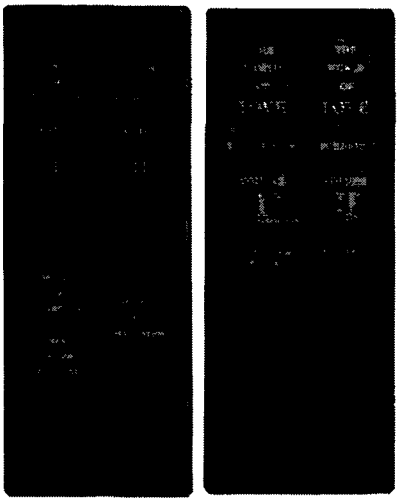

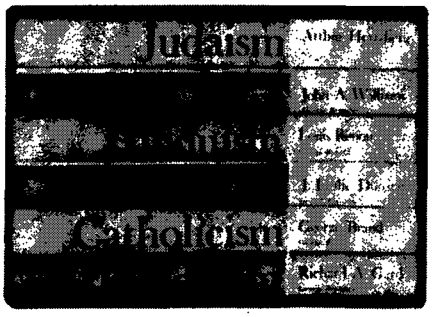

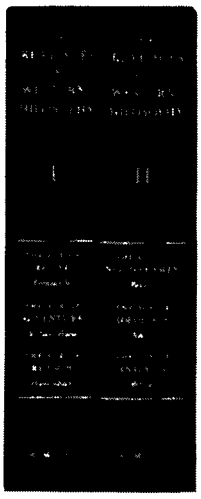

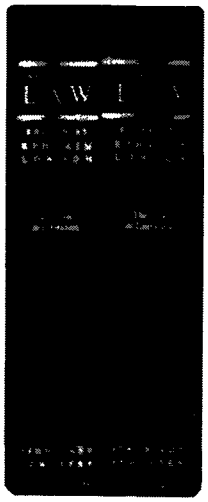

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it at all, he clearly does *not* think that women can choose to act together with other women in order to achieve worthy goals, without revealing complete mindlessness. Would we show a more commendable intensity of dedication if we left our husbands and children and hopped the first plane to Israel like an over-age Jewish Peace Corps?

One would think that raising money to cure the sick and train the helpless indicates less complacency than snide but unspecific and undocumented remarks about those who do—would one not?

LEA STERN
Scarsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It was with pure delight that I read George P. Elliott's review. . . . Isn't it possible for critics to judge our "assimilalienated" Jewish writers solely on a literary basis for a change?

GAIL B. GREENBLATT
Columbus, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thoroughly enjoyed George P. Elliott's review. . . . Jewish self-congratulation in American prose is just about ripe for the hatchet. . . .

CHANA FAERSTEIN
Jerusalem, Israel

MR. ELLIOTT *writes*:

"Dumpy" was snide, too easy, a type-casting word, and I apologize for having used it. "Good-hearted" surely is acceptable as indicating the impulse which brought Hadassah into being. "Complacency" is the injuring word, and I must defend having used it. It is my strong impression that Hadassah includes members who are moved only partly by the impulse to raise money for an eminently worthy cause; they also want to show off, look askance at competitors (the Pioneer Women perhaps?), be congratulated for their virtue. This does not invalidate the importance of their good works, but it does make them pretty hard to take sometimes. (If Mrs. Stern thinks people concerned with the arts are hard on women's organizations, which by and large acknowledge the importance of art and artists, she should hear what they say about equivalent men's organizations, which scarcely acknowledge so much as their existence.) I was opposing Hadassah to the Ark; in the scheme of values which elevates the holy mystery of the Ark, fund-

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raising for a worthy cause is certainly an honorable occupation but, like all good works, something to be humble about.

Johnny & the Primers

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Even more intriguing than Selma Fraiberg's appraisal of the actual educational handling of reading is the more basic philosophical view underlying it ["The American Reading Problem," June]. I refer to the frequency . . . of the word "pleasure" in her article. . . . Could it be that Mrs. Fraiberg is getting at something with the most profound psychological implications?

I am a young teacher myself. . . . I freely enjoy pleasures and wish the same gratification upon students of all ages. Why should intelligent educators torture children with materials that they themselves regard as painful and punishing?

M. Joy Stoll

San Francisco, California

To the Editor of Commentary:

Selma Fraiberg's article treats all too lightly the "two vapid children" who "have survived their national scandal in robust health." Indeed they have, and for valid reasons. Dick and Jane, along with Alice and Jerry, have been introduced by me to hundreds of children. . . . To watch a non-reader, of whatever age, turn the pages of these basic texts with keen interest . . . can be a most rewarding experience. . . . The simple language and brief stories are well suited to both oral and silent reading; the children's activities can be dramatized, and linked to the children's own experience and feelings. . . . Certainly the classroom teacher will use these texts as they are intended: for the teaching of reading. The school library and the encouragement of home libraries will provide for "enduring values of literature." . . .

If the readers of Commentary were to see the new phonic-emphasized texts, they would see where dullness really sets in! Our reading problems cannot be solved by the use of a phonics-only program in a beginning reading class. Dyslexia has many more and complex causes.

Pauline R. Jarett

East Williston, New York

[*Further correspondence on Mrs. Fraiberg's article will appear in our October issue.*]

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What has this man discovered about the "secret games" people play that has intrigued intellectuals and psychologists and can give you astonishing insights into your own hidden self?

His name is DR. ERIC BERNE. He is a prominent California psychiatrist. His special area of investigation: games . . . the dead serious little "games" we play with each other almost every day of our lives. (Games like RAPO, for example — our subterranean, national sex game — the unspoken call to arms that silently goes forth each night across the land.)

All of these games are at last totally exposed and brilliantly analyzed for you in a new book which — largely through the "grapevine" — has become a runaway dark-horse bestseller from coast to coast. It's called **GAMES PEOPLE PLAY.**

Dr. Berne's book, GAMES PEOPLE PLAY, is being greeted — by professionals and laymen alike — with the shock of recognition and the intense enthusiasm which go only to the breakthrough books like Reisman's *The Lonely Crowd* and Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis.*

As Dr. Berne has said, "Most people, in most of their family and business relationships are constantly playing games with each other. What's more, they are striving — often unconsciously — for an emotional 'payoff' which is startlingly different from what they might rationally expect to get from winning or losing their game. This is an intriguing phenomenon which everyone has observed at one time or another . . ." But never, until Dr. Berne, have we had anything like GAMES PEOPLE PLAY.

Here are just a few of the games and insights awaiting you (including a few that — in their gently humorous way — could actually save your sanity — or even your life).

▶ The game of **Schlemiel:** Every host or hostess who has ever had a lace curtain ruined or a rug destroyed by a "clumsy" accident will want to read this vivid analysis of one of our most common, least acknowledged party games. Find out the surprising answer to the question: Who's the schlemiel, the host or the guest?

▶ How to protect yourself if your psychiatrist starts to play **Schlemiel.**

▶ **"Mama, they're anti-sssssemitic."** Read how the latest wrinkle on this old joke is costing the American taxpayer millions each year.

▶ The game called **Homosexuality.** Dr. Berne shows why the psychiatrists' view of the homosexual is so biased, and how an analysis of his games can help the fully committed homosexual to avoid wasting a great deal of his time and creative energy.

▶ **Of great interest to psychotherapists:** an actual transcription of a session of transactional therapy with Dr. Berne's commentary.

▶ **Uproar:** A three-handed game. Dramatis personae: a maturing, teenage daughter; a father; a sexually inhibited mother. Read how one variant of this game has been sanctified as a semi-ritual in America . . . and read how the British upper classes handle it.

▶ **The Party Games.** Of course, every one of the 120 games in this book can be and is played at parties. You will chuckle or grimace as you read Dr. Berne's incisive thumbnail sketches of how often personality types like "Big Daddy" and "Little Old Me" unerringly find each other across a crowded room and how, as though by deep instinct, they start up brisk games of **Broken Skin, Blemish, How'm I Doing,** or that all-time party favorite: **Why Don't You — Yes But.**

▶ **The Office Games.** Often, a failure to understand the workings of such on-the-job favorites as **Ain't It Awful** and **Look What You Made Me Do** can cost a deserving man the advancement he deserves.

▶ **Creditor and Debtor.** Anyone who has ever suffered at the hands of one or the other — or both — will be grateful for this advice on how to have the last laugh on virulent members of the species.

> New games are constantly being discovered, especially at parties. So if you read **Games People Play** and keep your antennae tuned, you might make a real contribution to psychological research by noting and recording games that you've unearthed.

▶ The game called **Alcoholic.** This is perhaps the most startling discussion in this startling book. Dr. Berne starts off by stating, "In game analysis there is no such thing as 'alcoholism' or 'an alcoholic'; but there is a role, **The Alcoholic,** in a certain type of game." He then goes on to analyze the roles played by this **Star** and his supporting cast of **The Persecutor, The Rescuer, The Connection** and **The Patsy.** Dr. Berne shows that the "payoff", the true raison d'etre of the game of **Alcoholic,** actually lies in that aspect of the problem to which most doctors and other investigators pay the **least** attention and he casts serious doubt on the effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous cures.

▶ **Underworld games.** In this section you will find vivid descriptions of the most important criminal games — from third-degree **Rape** and the **Badger Game** all the way to **Adult Cops-and-Robbers** and **I Want Out** (played by criminals desperate to stay in stir!).

▶ **Marital and Sex Games.** Starting off with the "three star marriage buster" called **See What You Made Me Do,** Dr. Berne pinpoints many of the stifling Punch and Judy shows which husbands and wives needlessly accept in place of the exciting, satisfying drama of real living and loving. This book offers insight into aspects of marital unhappiness from impotence to frigidity.

▶ In the game called **Corner** and in its anti-game, you may well find the cause of and even the cure for your child's asthma or other psychophysical illness!

▶ **Good Games.** Here are the delightful descriptions of some of the many interesting games whose social contribution outweighs their exploitive element. They include **They'll Be Glad They Knew Me** and **Cavalier** (a favorite of poets).

▶ **Beyond Games and Towards Autonomy.** In this final, inspiring section, Dr. Berne explains just what he means by intimacy, why he regards it as the highest level of experience and how the reader may attain it.

Are you a post-graduate connoisseur of the art of Gamesmanship? Are you an enlightened therapist in search of vivifying and unifying psychiatric concepts? Or—most important of all — are you a private individual who would like sensitive, expert guidance toward a happier, more successful personal and professional life? Then GAMES PEOPLE PLAY was written for you.

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"ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT"

Reflections on the New York Times

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

TO THE FOREIGNER who spends some time in the United States, few features of the local scenery are more surprising than the general esteem in which the New York *Times* is held. This sentiment appears to encompass even the paper's critics, who are many and vocal. They may dislike its politics, its ownership, its cultural ambience, even its geographical location. They will generally agree that it is dull, long-winded, badly written, and afflicted by a kind of stodgy pomposity. But they are unanimous in holding that it is "authoritative." Whatever you may say against it, runs the refrain, you cannot deny that the *Times* is a truly great newspaper. Its coverage is immense. It prints more *news* than any other paper in the world. Above all, it is utterly reliable and independent. The rest of the profession could not get on without it. Neither, it seems, could the country as a whole.

To a reader brought up on papers such as the London *Times*, the Paris *Le Monde*, or the *Neue Zuercher Zeitung*, this near-unanimity constitutes a puzzle for which in the end one can find no explanation save local or national pride. One thinks one knows what authority in a daily journal is, and one does not find this particular quality in the New York *Times*: not, at any rate, in relation to most of the topics that matter to the rest of the world. The visitor is ready to concede that a steady diet of the paper will yield much valuable information about New York municipal politics and some interesting sidelights on the complex machinery which administers New York State. He will pay tribute to the industry with which the *Times* staff attends to the assembly of local news items, including the weekly selection of debutantes' photographs; and he will be duly impressed by the sheer size and weight of the Sunday edition. Beyond that, his admiration will tend to flag. Indeed, if he is interested in international affairs, and if he has himself at some stage been a member of the journalistic profession, he will wonder how the *Times* ever managed to get itself included in the list of the world's leading newspapers.

"Without the *Times*," wrote Mr. Richard Rovere some years ago (in the London weekly *Spectator* of January 2, 1959), "no one with any professional concern with events as they unfold can function in his accustomed way. Government officials cannot know what is going on in the government when they are unable to consult this newspaper; the *Times* does a more thorough job in Washington than all the Washington newspapers put together. Without the *Times*, all other publications that pretend to any seriousness are gravely handicapped, for the *Times* sets the standard, and a great deal of American journalism is really the *Times* in paraphrase, a day or two late. The syndicated columnists, the news magazines, the journals of opinion, radio and television analysis—all of these are dependent upon the *Times*. There are few writers on public affairs who do not work on the comfortable assumption that the *Times* will call to their attention anything they would want called to their attention." Now if this is true—and I see no reason to doubt it—there is, it seems to me, cause for serious concern. For the plain fact of the matter is that as a reliable source of information about the world outside America's borders, the New York *Times* is inadequate and misleading.

The odd thing about the passage just quoted is that it comes from a writer who plainly does not depend exclusively on the *Times* for his picture of the world, and whose own work reflects a degree of sophistication unheard of in Times Square. Anyone familiar with Mr. Rovere's Washington Letter in the *New Yorker* will, I believe, agree that its author inhabits a mental universe quite different from that of the average *Times* editorialist. Pointing this out, by the way, takes care of the suggestion that I am here applying snobbish European standards. The fact is that the best American journalism is very good indeed—as good as anything in Europe. It just so happens that, with few exceptions, the best American journalists do not work for the New York *Times*.

If statistical measurements alone are applied, there can, of course, be no question about the paper's pre-eminence. With a daily circulation of some 700,000 and a weekend run of close to a

GEORGE LICHTHEIM (who has also written under the name G. L. Arnold) is one of our contributing editors and a former editor of *The Twentieth Century* in London. The author of *Marxism* (1961), and *The New Europe* (1963), Mr. Lichtheim has taught at Columbia and is currently a visiting professor at Stanford.

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million-and-a-half, the *Times* (one is told) dwarfs its nearest competitors. It prints a daily average of sixty pages bearing nearly a half million words. Its Sunday edition regularly weighs over five pounds, and on at least one occasion ran to 612 pages. Charged with the task of filling those pages is a staff of over 5,000 men and women scattered in different bureaus across the USA and fifteen foreign countries. (I take some of these figures from an article by Mr. Joseph Kraft in the April 1961 *Esquire*.) More important, the paper's readership has been estimated (still according to Mr. Kraft) to include 44 per cent of all government officials in Washington, 30 per cent of the nation's college presidents, 60 per cent of its newspaper editors, and 28 per cent of its banking executives. Its special European edition is read by virtually all foreigners, from officials to students, who want to keep in touch with the United States. Finally, its syndicated news service reaches 66 other papers all over the world, with an estimated 25 million readers. These are solid claims to eminence. They do not, however, compensate for the persistent absence of the one element that would really make the *Times* an authoritative newspaper: professional competence in the reporting and interpreting of events, especially outside the United States.

In a sense this is an open secret. Within the journalistic profession it has long been accepted that the *Times* is not to be relied upon for the kind of reporting that readers of the more prestigious European papers take for granted. This opinion is naturally held most firmly by those who have spent some time abroad, and who have compared what happens there with what is reported in the *Times*. Mr. Murray Kempton wrote some years ago in *Encounter* (June 1961):

> The foreign coverage of the New York *Times* seems to me to be in general miserable. . . . There is no event occurring abroad upon which the *Times*—here I have to except its Middle European correspondents—has ever given me any information critical to my judgment of history. It was a year and a half behind on the Pasternak case. If I had depended on the *Times*, I don't believe I should ever have heard of Aldermaston; I should certainly not have understood even as much as I do now about the French moral crisis over Algeria. The entire British general election of 1955 was covered without giving us one significant quotation from Aneurin Bevan. . . . When I was in Italy two years ago I made a rather serious, if unsuccessful, effort to engage its culture. Since then I have retained a certain passion for that subject. I read every *Times* story on Italy with some concentration. I have no notion of what has happened since I left, beyond a certain chronological recollection of unexplained events.

Matters have not improved since then in this regard. In some respects, indeed, the situation has worsened, from the standpoint of a reader interested in overseas news, with the departure from Moscow of Mr. Max Frankel—perhaps the outstanding "professional" the *Times* has ever employed in a key foreign post. Mr. Frankel's otherwise welcome presence in Washington does not make up for the vacuum he left behind in Eastern Europe, an area now serviced by a group of writers of whom it is charitable to suppose that they are still learning their trade. Nor are one's doubts silenced by the reflection that in Western Europe there is at any rate Mr. C. L. Sulzberger; for Mr. Sulzberger has stopped being a reporter and become a commentator. As such he deserves much praise, for even when one disagrees with him, one is always able to take him seriously: more or less in the way in which one takes Mr. Walter Lippmann seriously, and in which one fails to take Mr. Joseph Alsop seriously. But news coverage is something else again. Neither Mr. Sulzberger's thoughtful dispatches from Paris nor the fading memory of Mr. Robert Kleinman's reporting can make up for the depressing conclusion that in its coverage of the international scene the New York *Times* consistently fails to reach the minimum standard of competence its readers have a right to expect.

II

OF THIS lamentable state of affairs many examples could be given, though only a handful can be recorded in this space. For convenience, they are all culled from a brief recent period—late May to late June 1965—and discussed in the light of what this writer believes to have been the true situation in certain areas which he feels professionally equipped to judge. No attempt will be made to assess the paper's editorial policies (save as reflected in the editing of news dispatches), or its cultural contributions. The unsatisfactory level of the latter is anyhow not seriously in dispute among educated readers. It is generally accepted that the *Times* (notwithstanding a recent improvement in the Sunday book supplement, which apparently reflects the rise of energetic competition in the form of *Book Week* and the fortnightly *New York Review*) cannot be expected to evolve beyond a certain decent mediocrity where intellectual matters are concerned. I pass no judgment on this state of affairs. I merely note that the paper's strength is reputed to lie in its news coverage. Yet this is just where it seems to me that the shoe pinches most urgently.

It would be unfair to deny that there have been examples of competent news gathering, and in at least one recent case something like a display of editorial obstinacy in the face of official displeasure. The reporting from Santo Domingo was not merely exhaustive—in fact rather too exhaustive: in the end one was drowned in a sea of gray matter—but patently true to the facts, even if not

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as incisive as Mr. Barnard Collier's dispatches in the *Herald Tribune*. To be sure, one got as much about the Dominican political situation from a single article in *Le Monde* as from all the endless reports in the *Times*. But at least a reader who had the patience to wade through those columns could eventually find the few nuggets of gold among the dross. It is also, I suppose, a tribute to editorial consistency that the mess in Vietnam has not been covered up, and that Mr. David Halberstam's successors in Saigon have continued to retail facts rather than official fantasies. This said, I have come to the end of the laudatory part. All the rest is plain disaster.

THE MAIN reason this is not more widely perceived probably has to do with the peculiar principle of selectivity followed by those responsible for the paper's foreign news coverage. The editors in New York plainly are not interested in anything save "spot news," and the correspondents in the field for the most part are unable to produce anything else. Analytical coverage is no part of their training. They are expected to discover what is going on, in the most literal sense. If there is no "crisis" (a term by now almost wholly denuded of meaning), they feel there is nothing to report. The exceptions are provided by a few privileged correspondents who are allowed to roam further afield and to file "background" material. I shall come to them later. For the moment, let us see what happens during an average week or fortnight when there is no upheaval and only the daily routine of political weather-reporting.

One such period was the week beginning May 16. On May 15 the *Times* man in Delhi, Mr. J. Anthony Lukas (who is generally one of the paper's abler correspondents), cabled a report on the Indian food situation, which appeared the following day under the reassuring two-column headline: "WINDFALL FOR THE MAN IN A DHOTI: INDIA'S FOOD PRICES CUT SHARPLY." A diligent reader of the dispatch might have discovered that there was in fact very little to celebrate. As Mr. Lukas himself observed: "Food prices always decline in the spring . . . following the year's main harvest, which ends in April." However, "this year's decline was sharper than usual, partly because prices had further to drop from last year's inflated highs." So the cheerful headline was really not quite appropriate, though it might have been said to be in tune with the overriding principle in force among *Times* editors: always look for the bright side of things. Mr. Lukas, of course, was not responsible for the misleading headline, but his report might perhaps be said to have encouraged optimism at headquarters. The price cut had been announced by the Minister of Food, Mr. Subramaniam, "a witty, urbane man whose eyes twinkle behind horned-rimmed [*sic*] glasses." He "was delighted to report that rice and wheat prices had declined 18 per cent since January." Mr. Lukas was delighted too. "To the average Indian," he cabled, "who last year had to pull his dhoti, or cotton shirt, even tighter around his meager belly, it was the most welcome news imaginable. . . . To him, the drops already recorded, and those expected to follow later in the summer, mean that he will be able to afford more to eat than he could during the sharp inflation and near famine that began here last July." In this roundabout way one learned that things had been pretty bad last year. Now, however, there was an improvement. In January, "a bushel of wheat cost about 19 rupees ($4) in New Delhi . . . almost five days pay for a skilled worker. Today that same bushel costs about 16 rupees or four days pay." No indication of how much the price had risen previously, during the famine period, and whether its current drop had brought it back to "normal." In the absence of this information, unfortunately, the rest of the story conveyed very little. Moreover, how much of the worker's princely income of 80 cents per diem now goes for food, neither Mr. Lukas nor the twinkly-eyed Subramaniam thought it worth telling. All in all, the news value of this story was slight, though the correspondent had to be given credit for trying to go after the important facts. The cheerful headline comes under a different rubric: that of unconscious fraud, perpetrated no doubt with the best of intentions.

That was the news from India for the day. To most readers it must have sounded reassuring: things getting better. In fact—as everyone familiar with this area knows—the food situation is *not* getting better, if population growth is taken into account. But *Times* correspondents are not expected to poke into the disagreeable realities behind the official façade. Theirs not to reason why. The man in Delhi had done his duty. So had the headline writer. After all, people who *really* want to know about India's food prospects can always read the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Economist*.

By way of contrast, the same issue (May 16) carried a "human interest story" from Moscow. Nothing so dull as food prices. This one was about the behavior of young people: a topical worry, it seems, in the Soviet Union as elsewhere. "Movie-struck youngsters are causing increasing concern for [*sic*] Soviet youth leaders," cabled Mr. Theodore Shabad from the Soviet capital that day. How are they doing that? "The youngsters flood film magazines with letters, besiege casting departments, and mob the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography. The authorities are trying to deter them by painting an actor's life in blackest terms." Clearly not a crisis dispatch—Mr. Shabad was having a day off from his usual beat. "How to become a movie actress? That question seems to be uppermost in the minds of Soviet girls 14 to 17 years old." And of girls in other countries,

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too. The purport of this particular story (and many others like it) was that the Russians are just like you and me. This is doubtless true, except that it has absolutely no bearing upon the nature of the regime or the behavior to be apprehended from it. But then Mr. Halberstam, since his promotion from Saigon to Warsaw, has developed the same trick. *His* story that day (it is still May 16) dealt with the effects of drink and was prominently featured under the headline: "PRIDE OF POLAND: A TOAST IN VODKA." The reader was not spared a single cliché. "Vodka is a part of life here. It is served at the most formal tables, for the most important visiting dignitaries; it appears at impromptu gatherings of friends, and at casual afternoon chats at coffeehouses." After some initial bewilderment one discovers that this genial stuff leads up to a commercial. "Polish vodka may be the best in the world. So good in fact that the United States Embassy, which works at trying to increase economic ties with Poland, has often encouraged the Poles to attempt a major export campaign. Most Americans here are convinced that Polish vodka, properly advertised, would be a success in the United States. But last year only about $100,000 worth was exported to the United States . . ." and so on, for another half-column.

Well, that was the news from Eastern Europe that day. After all, Sovietologists and other *nudniks* can always read *Le Monde* (they should).

But the *Times* also has its political experts planted right in the Soviet capital, within earshot of the Kremlin. "SOVIET'S ATTACKS ON JOHNSON GROW," it headlined prominently on May 22, over a cable from its diplomatic sharpshooter, Peter Grose. Not a man to miss the obvious, Mr. Grose quoted extensively from official speeches and articles expressing displeasure with recent American actions. These included a *Tass* statement of May 20 commenting unfavorably on Mr. Johnson. An unnamed diplomat consulted by Mr. Grose thought the *Tass* communiqué (lengthy extracts of which Mr. Grose had already cabled the day before) "reminiscent of the worst things" Khrushchev had said about Eisenhower in 1960, at the time of the U-2 incident. Mr. Grose duly noted this searching comment, and then went on to quote from "an article in the current issue of the *New Times*, a weekly journal of foreign affairs." (It is not, by the way, necessary to be stationed in Moscow to get the *New Times*, which is freely available in most Western capitals and is generally regarded as a reliable weathervane.) "Diplomats doubt that this recent Soviet attitude reflects any sudden shift in policy," Mr. Grose reported. "Rather they believe it is a result of Soviet frustration and anger at the dilemma forced upon the Kremlin" by Mr. Johnson's actions. Well, without being a diplomatic correspondent I had gathered something of the sort myself.

On the following day (May 23) there was nothing from Mr. Grose. Instead, readers were left to mull over a brief and inconspicuous UPI dispatch which began: "The Soviet Union said today President Johnson's policies were pushing the world 'to the brink of world war' and compared the President to Hitler." This sounded ominous, but on inspection it turned out that the alarming comparison had not been made by "the Soviet Union," but merely by the official daily, *Izvestia*. To the editors and correspondents of the *Times*, anything that comes out of Moscow invariably represents "the Soviet Union," whether it is an editorial, a new movie, or Professor Liberman's "discovery" that pants cannot be sold to customers if the size does not fit. Mr. Grose's dispatch of May 20 summarizing the *Tass* statement opened with the words: "The Soviet Union warned today that armed United States intervention in local crises was threatening to ignite a broader conflict between East and West." Readers not familiar with the habitual style of *Tass* communiqués (which come out of the Soviet Foreign Ministry at a fast pace whenever the situation demands it) must have thought things were really beginning to get serious. In actual fact the Russians were simply voicing their displeasure with Mr. Johnson. The comparison with Hitler had been made dozens of times during the Korean war, only then it was Mr. Truman ("the mad haberdasher") who was accused of setting the globe on fire. If the revival of these polemics signified anything, it suggested that the responsible Soviet officials had reluctantly concluded that Mr. Johnson bore a stronger resemblance to Truman than to Roosevelt. Presumably they had been so advised by their ambassador in Washington, who in turn might have formed this quite accurate impression by consulting his regular sources in the capital. All this is part of the diplomatic drill, as are *Tass* communiqués and *Izvestia* editorials. Most serious newspapers employ one or two "diplomatic correspondents" to enlighten their readers on the significance of these goings-on, since after all the public cannot be expected to remember everything that was said and done fifteen years ago. The *Times*, of course, has its weekend section, of which more later. What it does not have is a staff member who—when reports of this kind come in—is able to set them in perspective.

THIS CONSISTENT failure to make sense of the raw material pouring from the newsroom tickers lends a certain charm to the paper's handling of the more recondite aspects of inter-Communist polemics. "MOSCOW WARNS REDS MUST UNITE" (May 28) promised the reader fresh illumination upon this confusing topic. What he actually found beneath the headline was another dispatch from the tireless Grose, this time briefly summarizing a 3,000-word *Pravda* article. So far as one could gather from the few extracts, and from Mr. Grose's interspersed comments

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(plus those of "Western analysts" in the Soviet capital whom he had thoughtfully consulted before filing his story), *Pravda* was trying to tell the Chinese that there ought to be a moratorium on polemics, at least in public. No other "Reds" were mentioned in the story, which was followed up by a brief report from Paris that the leaders of the French and Italian Communist parties had just met secretly in Geneva; an editorial footnote drawing attention to this fact was actually spatchcocked into Mr. Grose's cable. From this the reader could only infer that the two big West European Communist parties were contemplating some joint move in the Sino-Soviet dispute. In fact, however—as appeared from a very full report in *Le Monde* on May 28, which also carried the official French CP communiqué on the talks in Geneva—MM. Waldeck Rochet and Luigi Longo had met in Switzerland on May 24-25 to discuss the Common Market and the steps to be taken by their respective parties to coordinate their tactics in Europe. To this *Le Monde* added the significant information that the French CP had come around to the Italian viewpoint on the subject of European integration, and that the next step was likely to be a conference of the Communist parties of "the Six," with a view to preparing the entry of Communist deputies (hitherto excluded) into the European parliamentary assembly at Strasbourg. If this dramatic development—perhaps the biggest shift in West European Communist affairs for a decade—had come to the notice of the *Times*, it was kept secret. Instead, readers were served a brief and inconsequential report from Rome (dated May 27) to the effect that the Italian Communist leader Giorgio Amendola had been denounced for the hundredth time as a "revisionist" by the Albanian party organ *Zeri i Popullit*. "The article was reported from Tirana by the Italian news agency Ansa," the Rome dispatch gravely stated, thereby anticipating any possible complaint that the readers of the *Times* are left in doubt about the provenance of its reports. There is indeed nothing wrong with the news-gathering machine of the paper, except that the people who run it have no sense of relevance and in a good many cases appear not to understand what they are getting on the tape.

This weakness, it might be supposed, is corrected in the Sunday edition, when editors, columnists, and foreign correspondents are encouraged to adopt a more reflective mood. But here a great deal depends on the competence of those concerned.

While Mr. Frankel was stationed in Moscow, there was something to be got out of perusing his background articles. His successors, when not literally quoting "Western observers here" (who always sound remarkably alike), are given to circumlocution. On May 30 the *News of the Week in Review* section filled almost half a page with Mr. Grose's reflections on the political atmosphere in the Soviet capital. Little emerged save trivialities, leading up to the predictable conclusion: "In the mind of the Soviets, according to diplomatic analysts, were the continued blasts from Chinese propagandists that the Soviet Union is somehow failing to pull its weight in Vietnam." What else could have been in their minds? Then came this gem: "Messrs. Brezhnev and Kosygin have been *visibly stunned* [my italics] by statements such as these from Peking propaganda organs" (some press extracts followed). How visibly were they stunned? Did they blanch in public? Did they confide their dismay to Mr. Grose? There are some clichés that foreign correspondents are well advised to stay away from.

NOT THAT the home office does much better. On June 14 a full-page editorial round-up of domestic and foreign reaction to U.S. policy was remarkable chiefly for persistent waffling and a resolute attachment to triviality. Nine-tenths of the space was devoted to home opinion—a normal allotment. After the Senators and Congressmen, it was the turn of private citizens. "John M. Muse, a druggist in Decatur," gave it as his opinion that "Johnson is doing some of the things Goldwater wanted to do." Mrs. Dorothy Hager, a secretary in Atlanta, approved of sending the Marines to Santo Domingo. On the other hand, Lyman T. Johnson, a teacher in a downtown Louisville high school, voiced some doubts about the other Johnson. "We can't convince people that our way is right by using a pistol," he was quoted as saying. In between, the *Times* managed to insert the opinions of a few foreigners, including one Charles de Gaulle, reputedly President of France, who appeared to be a stiff-necked character. Elsewhere, too, there were signs of unrest. "Bonn, London, Ottawa and Rome reflect official support for the President, but an undercurrent of private concern." In this context, "private" apparently means "off the record," since strictly speaking governmental attitudes are never "private," even when voiced informally. "Even in Moscow," a correspondent reported, "some officials are in 'near despair' as they look at the future of Soviet-United States relations." The phrase, "Even in Moscow," leaves one puzzled. Where else but in Moscow would a correspondent have noticed an atmosphere of "near despair"? But I suppose it does no good to quibble over tiny details.

On the rare occasions when the *Times* informs its readers of what is being said abroad, its summaries tend to be brief to the point of obscurity. On June 11, the London *Times* was quoted to the effect that U.S. policy in Vietnam might cause a rift in Mr. Wilson's Cabinet; its own editorial line was summed up in two brief sentences. The Conservative *Daily Telegraph* fared somewhat worse. The only French papers quoted were the Gaullist *La Nation* and *Combat* (a weekly which hardly anyone reads). The only German paper

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cited on the subject of US troop reinforcements was the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* in Munich which "said the decision meant that United States bombing of matériel and personnel centers in North Vietnam had failed, a point also made by *The Times* of London." This might be called stenographic reporting. "Information of Copenhagen" (presumably a newspaper) said President Johnson "had apparently developed cold feet." Lastly, there was Hong Kong. "Communist newspapers in Hong Kong said the United States was turning the Vietnamese conflict into another Korean war. Chinese Nationalist organs, however, praised United States policy." Wonder of wonders.

Lest I give the impression that this collection of inanities is somewhat unfair to the hard-working editors of what purports to be the world's greatest newspaper, let me add that my own technique on this occasion has been as haphazard as theirs. I have simply grabbed the first fistful of samples out of the bag. There is plenty more. Indeed one could go on for pages.

III

WHAT HAS BEEN said so far comes under the general heading of slovenliness and editorial absent-mindedness. While these are not unimportant, it is fair to say that a daily newspaper's general standing hinges upon its processing of the actual news flow, rather than upon the intellectual eminence of its editorial staff. There are some very good newspapers whose writing is far from brilliant (though seldom as dull and sloppy as that of the New York *Times*). They are good because their readers can at a glance obtain a reasonably full and accurate picture of what is happening in the world. For many years, the most competent performer in this field was the London *Daily Telegraph*, but it is my impression—speaking as a visitor—that the Washington *Post* is not far behind and may now even be a little ahead. A journal of this kind does not aim at the political authority of the London *Times* or the intellectual rigor of *Le Monde*. Its purpose is rather to provide a reliable service for a large and widely spread political, business, and professional readership. As such it can play an important role. Most of my British acquaintances prefer the *Telegraph* to the London *Times* as a news vehicle. The *Telegraph*'s writing is plain, and its editorials reflect a kind of Toryism worlds removed from the complex cerebrations of Printing House Square. (To become a leader-writer on the London *Times* one needs more than political acumen and a decent social background. Even a classical education and an Oxford "first" are not enough. There is a special flavor to its writing ultimately traceable to the distilled essence of 300 years of High Church Anglicanism). But Conservative and middlebrow (by British standards) though it is, the *Telegraph* has its virtues: having perused its news columns one has a fair grasp of the day's events and can then turn to one's favorite journal of opinion—say the Liberal *Guardian*, whose style is better but whose news coverage tends to be a trifle spotty.

Where does the New York *Times* stand in this competition? My impulse is to say "near the bottom," but one must be fair. There are occasions when the paper's technique comes in handy, as for example in reproducing the full text of an official speech or document. In nine cases out of ten the contents are boring, but there is always the odd exception, and in any event it is useful to have a record of what has actually been said by public officials even on routine occasions. This service, then, the paper performs—at least domestically (foreign statesmen, however eminent, seldom rate a textual reproduction of their remarks). The *Times* is also unique among American newspapers in covering United Nations debates, and since the UN happens to be in New York, this gives its delegates and personnel an obvious incentive for reading the paper. Having acknowledged this, one is bound to add that in most other respects the paper's foreign coverage is shockingly bad. Indeed, much of it is so bad that one cannot think of any European daily of comparable standing whose readers would put up with the kind of service New Yorkers are getting (and appear to be quite happy with).

To grasp just how bad the *Times*'s foreign reporting is, one has to compare it daily with the performance of its rivals, and few people have the time. Moreover, it is not just a matter of matching it against a single specimen from abroad (perhaps its London namesake). One has to sit down to the job of analyzing its news columns over a fairly extended period—say a month—in the light of: (a) the parallel reporting in half a dozen foreign dailies in at least three languages; and (b) the actual course of events, so far as it can be reconstructed and understood by an independent observer, not only through what he reads, but also through what he happens to know from his own expertise, plus that of colleagues in the political and journalistic fields. When one has done this for a period, one notices flaws not obvious to the general reader. If (like the present writer) one has been a foreign correspondent oneself, one recalls that even in those dim days one came across plenty of instances where the New York *Times* had not, to put it mildly, won professional acclaim for its handling of the news. The fact is that the paper's own image of itself—as reflected in the public and private utterances of its executives—is at odds with its standing within the profession. Most practicing correspondents with international experience think it not only dull but incompetent. As for the army of academic experts on international affairs, now scattered in universities and research institutes all over the globe, one must have listened to their frantic

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abuse of the *Times*'s seemingly incurable sloppiness and mediocrity to get a fair notion of its true "image" in the political world. On ceremonial occasions this is never mentioned, which is why the paper's executives seem quite unaware of its real standing.

As an example of how this reputation has been earned, let us take a look at how the paper, as compared with others abroad, handled Franco-German affairs last June—a critical time for both countries and for the Common Market. In that month France additionally went through a domestic upheaval which offered the *Times* a wonderful opportunity to display its acumen, for the first half of June witnessed M. Gaston Defferre's takeover bid for the leadership of the French Socialist party.

For a start, the June 4 issue of the *Times* carried a Paris dispatch from Mr. Henry Giniger reporting the opening of the Socialist party congress at Clichy and giving an extremely brief and garbled account of M. Defferre's speech and the reactions. From this one gathered that the Mayor of Marseilles had "pleaded with his party . . . to join other left and center forces in a federation as the only way back to power." What Defferre and his friends had actually proposed was an eventual fusion with the left wing of the Catholic movement, and this was what the whole debate (which had been going on for months) was about. No one could have gathered this from Mr. Giniger's story, which dealt with everything except the central issue (The headline ran: "DEFFERRE URGES UNION OF PARTIES"—a wholly misleading formula). Two days later a second dispatch from Mr. Giniger (dated June 5, by which time the Socialist congress had been in session for three days and the entire French press had carried lengthy reports of the proceedings) still said almost nothing about the real issue, and in the bargain provided a gratuitous piece of misinformation: M. Defferre was losing his battle against M. Guy Mollet. According to Mr. Giniger: "Gaston Defferre, Socialist candidate for the French Presidency, fought today to stave off apparent defeat for his effort to unite France's left and center parties in a federation against the Gaullist regime." What Defferre had really urged was a Socialist-Catholic alliance directed impartially against the Gaullists and the Communists, and this proposal was adopted by the congress a few hours after Mr. Giniger had filed his second report (the headline that day, June 6, ran: "SOCIALISTS COOL TO DEFFERRE PLAN"). The opposition in fact collapsed on the first ballot, after Defferre had made it plain that in case of defeat he would withdraw his candidacy for the Presidency. This outcome was accurately predicted a week in advance by most commentators, including the left-wingers on the weekly *Nouvel Observateur* and the heavyweight pundits on *Le Monde*. It had also been anticipated by the Communists, who for weeks had been directing their fire against Defferre. Its importance—apart from the prospective burying of the church-school issue, which has long been central to French politics—had to do with NATO, since the Communists' principal grievance against Defferre was his unduly pro-American orientation.

None of this appeared in Mr. Giniger's reports or in the subsequent editorial on the matter. In fact the *Times* more or less dropped the subject. On June 12 it carried two messages from the sapient Giniger. One (which was featured on the front page) dealt with the theft of some examination papers ("NEW EXAM SCANDAL DISCLOSED IN FRANCE"). The other, a background report on the French political setup ("PROBLEMS BESET CHALLENGERS OF DE GAULLE"), for the first time mentioned what the whole upheaval of the past week had been about: the future relationship between Socialists and Roman Catholics. But this vital piece of information was tucked away inside a five-column spread dealing, in elementary language, with French political history since the war. Thereafter silence until June 19, when the *Times* featured a report from yet another Paris correspondent, Mr. Henry Kamm, reporting the collapse of "unity" talks between Defferre and his prospective allies. From this one learned that "seventeen political leaders" had gathered in Paris to consider the formation of an anti-Gaullist alliance, but not who they were or whom they represented. In consequence it remained unclear why the talks had failed, or who had been involved in them, though an expert might have guessed that the crunch had come over the clerical issue, and that some of Defferre's prospective allies among the smaller anti-clerical parties had put a spoke in the wheel. But guessing games of this kind are not, strictly speaking, what reporting in a daily paper is meant to provide a basis for.

FROM DEFFERRE to de Gaulle. Ever since he blocked British membership in the Common Market, the General has been in bad odor around the *Times* editorial office, not to mention NATO and the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Of the numerous correspondents whom the *Times* maintains in and around Paris, only Mr. C. L. Sulzberger occasionally has a kind word for him. The others are reserved or—in the case of Mr. Drew Middleton—actively hostile. Mr. Middleton used to be based in London and has always tended to be an admirer of all things British. De Gaulle's exclusion of his favorite country from the Common Market hit him hard, and he has not been the same man since it happened. During the month of June he produced a steady stream of disparagement, ranging from a private poll of local opinion in the Lille area to gloomy animadversions upon the effect of French policies on NATO. The Lille report, which appeared on June 5 under a prominent

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headline ("NO PRIZES FOR LOCAL BOY—BUSTLING LILLE FINDS LITTLE GOOD TO SAY ABOUT DE GAULLE"), recorded Mr. Middleton's personal impressions of the area. Lille is de Gaulle's birthplace. It also happens to have a Socialist town council, a fact not mentioned in the report, which dwelt rather upon the views of the local business community. "When an American remarked at a dinner party that President de Gaulle was a 'Lilleois,' the hostess sniffed and pointed out that the General had been born here only because his father had been teaching here at the time." No prizes are offered for guessing the identity of the American. Not content with sampling the opinion of hostesses and other local bigwigs, the conscientious Middleton also made the rounds of the lower-class estaminets. "In one of the cafés near the 17th-century bourse, or stock exchange, a fellow drinking cognac chased with beer said he could not care less where President de Gaulle had been born. 'I am against him and all his politics, he announced.' " From other informants Mr. Middleton and the New York *Times* reader gathered that Lille, being an industrial center, is all for European integration. "As inhabitants of a frontier city, the people of Lille are inclined to be unimpressed by their President's talk of national sovereignty and independence. Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany are so near, and economic relations so intimate, that nationalism becomes a bit blurred." Eastern France must have changed a lot since the days when it was the major stronghold of traditional nationalism, and French industrialists must have changed even more since the time (less than a decade ago) when they were the chief supporters of protectionism and the foremost critics of the Common Market. But if they *have* taken economic union to their hearts, then surely they must remember that it was de Gaulle's government which in 1958 lowered the tariff barrier? Or are they against him on *both* counts—because he is a nationalist and because he led France into the Common Market? It is all very bewildering—or would be if one were able to attach the least importance to Mr. Middleton's reporting.

Not that he is a mere reporter. From time to time he poaches on the preserve of his colleague Mr. Sulzberger and comes forward in the role of pundit. On June 11 (the day after de Gaulle had "off the record" told some French parliamentarians what he thought of the Americans and their "dirty affair" in Vietnam), Mr. Middleton sent an extremely lengthy dispatch which appeared the following day under the double-column headline: "NATO'S CRITICAL HOUR." The bulk was devoted to a pessimistic forecast of the imminent Erhard-de Gaulle encounter in Bonn, and the possible consequences if the two men should fail to agree. To Mr. Middleton it seemed certain that they would clash. "Nowhere in Europe, diplomats say, is the attitude toward the French more chilly than in Bonn." "Diplomats contend that these results [of Gaullist policy], coupled with France's flirtation with the Soviet Union, have strengthened Moscow's position in the struggle for the control of Germany." "The French, these diplomats concede, may have reasons for their policies, as they are outlined in the General's utterances on world affairs. But qualified Allied sources strongly doubt that the intelligence reports on which French decisions are based are as complete, penetrating, and independent of the Executive branch's view as those of several other Western governments" [such as the United States?]. "French foreign policy begins—and perhaps ends—in Bonn." "In theory, French policies toward Germany are based on the Treaty of Cooperation of January 1963. But it is argued that President de Gaulle's execution of this policy aims solely at inducing West Germany to follow French objectives, rather than at genuine cooperation." And so on, for two whole columns. By the time one had finished Mr. Middleton's essay there could be no doubt as to whom he had been talking to and what he was trying to accomplish. And this kind of stuff passes for responsible "independent" journalism!

NOW TURN TO the French, German, and British newspaper comments on the Erhard-de Gaulle meeting of June 11-12. The Germans indeed had grounds for worry, since they knew in advance that no agreement was possible on de Gaulle's pet theme: greater independence from the U.S. They therefore decided to make the best of it and to concentrate on practical details. *Die Welt* of Hamburg (conservative, pro-British, and generally cool to France) on June 12 headlined over three columns: "CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH FRANCE IN THE MILITARY DOMAIN." The subject of this piece was an agreement on the opening day of the talks for the military staffs of the two countries to work more closely together, notably in electronics. The paper's editorial opened with the words, "The sky in Bonn is grey, but it does not rain," and its general tone was cordial, with the stress on the need for the two countries to cooperate wherever possible. The influential *Frankfurter Allgemeine* (June 12) headlined "DE GAULLE AND ERHARD TRYING FOR A BETTER CLIMATE" and emphasized the friendly atmosphere of the opening talks. The Bonn correspondent of the London *Times* thought the General's welcome rather tepid, but noted that the two sides had agreed "on extended Franco-German collaboration on conventional arms . . . and on the joint fitting out of small units of the French and German navies with data-processing equipment [which] will not make it any easier for Britain to develop her own research and development projects with the Germans." Progress was also made in educational matters such as language teaching and student exchanges. A Berlin message of June

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11 to the London *Times* reported a formal statement by the Social Democratic party (of which Mayor Brandt is chairman) urging closer union with France. "The principle of close cooperation with France was strongly emphasized by the Social Democratic leadership, including the 'shadow cabinet,' in a statement issued today. Franco-German reconciliation and friendship were indispensable for German politics, it said.... All possibilities for collaboration with France should be made use of... Germany should not be faced one day by a situation in which she would have to choose between France and the United States."

That same day (June 12) the New York *Times* merely carried a brief dispatch from its Bonn correspondent, Mr. Philip Shabecoff, on an inside page, reporting the understanding on technical cooperation and an agreement to postpone the June 30 deadline on the financing of Common Market farm policies. But on the following day (June 13) the *Times* had what its editors plainly regarded as a *real* story: "DE GAULLE REBUFFS ERHARD ON EUROPEAN UNITY PARLEY," it trumpeted over two top front-page columns. "TWO-DAY VISIT TO BONN ENDS IN DISCORD—GERMANS REPORT AN AGREEMENT, BUT FRENCH AGAIN ATTACH CONDITIONS." When one turned to the British, French, and German papers on this and the following days, one discovered that no one outside the New York *Times* office had noticed these calamities. What had happened was that the Press Officers of the two delegations were at odds over the precise meaning of an agreement to call a conference of "the Six" (the Common Market partners). According to the Germans, the French promise was unconditional. According to the French, it hinged on a prior understanding about certain aspects of Common Market agricultural policy. That was all—hardly worth a banner headline. In fact, no one in Bonn or Paris took this traditional bit of diplomatic maneuvering seriously. Both the French and the Germans declared themselves satisfied with the talks. The London *Sunday Telegraph* on June 13 ran a lengthy report from its Diplomatic Correspondent, who had covered the Bonn talks. It appeared under a three-column front-page headline, "DE GAULLE AGREES TO SUMMIT OF THE 'SIX'—CONCESSIONS TO BONN," and opened with the words: "President de Gaulle left Bonn today after a major and apparently successful 'fence-mending operation' to repair damaged relations with his West German ally." The correspondent of the London *Sunday Times** thought the two governments were as far apart as ever on NATO and European integration, but noted the agreement to call a "summit" meeting of the Six. Most French and German papers stressed the agreement and played down the bargaining. The New York *Times*, however, for another day stuck to its line. "PARIS-BONN SPLIT IS EXPECTED TO SHOW AT PARLEY," it headlined a June 13 dispatch from another man in Bonn, Arthur J. Olsen. "France and West Germany," Mr. Olsen cabled, "are expected to show again in Brussels tomorrow that they remain at odds on how to advance the unity of Europe." Then, unaccountably, the subject was dropped. From one day to the next, readers of the *Times* were told nothing more about it. The French and the Germans had failed to play their allotted roles and were punished by being ignored. The subject only re-emerged into prominence three weeks later when there was a *real* clash at Brussels over European farm policy: not between the French and the Germans, but between the French and the Dutch, whom the *Times* had never mentioned.

I HAVE GONE into some detail over this foolish performance: not because it is unusual, but rather because it is typical of the way foreign news is handled by the *Times*. First, the commitment to an editorial (or ambassadorial) line: the French and the Germans are going to quarrel. Next, for a day or two, a determined effort to write the "news" in the spirit of this assumption. Then, when the facts won't fit the formula, dead silence. Anyone who studies the paper over a period of time must, I think, reach the conclusion that this *modus operandi* has become second nature. I am sure it is neither conscious nor premeditated. It is rather a consequence of the urge to sound grave and authoritative, plus a determination never to admit a mistake. The London *Times* in the old days used to employ the same technique, but in its case the Olympian manner had some substance behind it. Besides, the Establishment positively demanded that kind of tone. It was part of the elaborate ceremonial rigmarole of British society: an entire ruling class symbolically enlarged and presented to itself via a rigidly formal, stylized, hieratic manner of discourse. To this day the London *Times* is as much part of the Establishment as is the House of Lords or the Church of England. It employs a linguistic code which connects it with these institutions, and through them with the governing stratum as a whole: itself an amalgam of the ancient aristocracy, the business plutocracy, and the upper ranks of the civil service. Even its follies (e.g., the "appeasement" of Germany in the 1930's) have to be judged in institutional terms. They disclose the inner life of the governing set—the temporary link between All Souls (or some other Oxford college) and the Foreign Office hierarchy of the period. The New York *Times* is not in this sense an Establishment paper and cannot be. It serves a middle-class public and its tone is determinedly middlebrow. The note of gravity, the implied claim to authority, is based on a single implied characteristic: professional competence, mastery of the factual material, possession of all the worthwhile material "fit to print." And it is just this claim which

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no experienced reader of the paper can grant to it.

Not even where it should be comparatively easy: in the reporting of economic and financial matters. The *Times*, after all, is primarily a businessman's paper, though it has pretensions to being a lot else besides. One would expect it to be genuinely knowledgeable about economics. It does in fact carry a lot of news about such matters, though mostly of a local kind. When it comes to the international scene, the reporting once more is skimpy, and what there is does not always inspire confidence. The paper does best when official speeches have to be summarized. Beyond that level, its correspondents tend to get lost. In recent months a simple test has been provided by Britain's persistent economic troubles. The *Times* failed it. In all the weeks since the sterling crisis exploded last October, the *Times* has not offered its readers anything beyond platitudes. This must have been at least partly the fault of its London correspondents, one of whom, Mr. Anthony Lewis, used to cover the Supreme Court until he was suddenly sent to London and told to report on British affairs. I regret having to state that reading Mr. Lewis is an experience even more painful than watching his various predecessors at work. Mr. Middleton, in the years when he was London correspondent, never departed an inch from the dead center of conventionality, but at least he had the advantage of knowing and liking the country. Mr. Lewis is clearly bewildered by the British, and his reporting gives the impression of an able man trying to do a job for which he has no training and which does not particularly appeal to him. As it happens, Britain just now is grappling with a deep-seated economic malfunction, and economics is not Mr. Lewis's forte. Nor does he get much help from his colleague, Clyde H. Farnsworth, who is supposed to cover this part of the field.

MR. FARNSWORTH'S dispatches (which appear in the business section of the paper) are long, dull, and cliché-ridden; they are also uninformative. By this I mean that they contain few facts that are worth knowing, and many trivial details that could be left untouched. Moreover, he has a habit of being wrong both in his forecasts and in his interpretations. On June 13, for example, the business section of the *Times* featured a lengthy report by him under the prominently displayed headline: "BRITISH ECONOMY TERMED IMPROVED." This told the reader that "although none of Britain's basic economic problems have been solved by the eight-month-old Labor Government" (that would have been asking a bit much anyway), "the pound sterling will probably continue to be worth $2.80 for some time." "Prime Minister Harold Wilson and Chancellor of the Exchequer James Callaghan are confident the nation has turned the economic corner." And so on for an entire column of background reporting, which also stressed the generous aid already provided to Britain by the international financial community. The chief cloud on the horizon appeared to be the possibility that the Labor Government might feel encouraged "in a fresh bid for popularity" to spend too much on social welfare or on cheap loans to home buyers. In the long run there was a danger (always according to Mr. Farnsworth and his unnamed informants, who sounded remarkably like City bankers) that too much protective tariff coddling might remove the sap from the nation's muscles. "Critics say some of the new austerity measures tend to make industry flabby. The tariff surcharge, formerly 15 per cent and now 10 per cent, is a case in point, critics say. Britain, already a high-tariff nation, needed to lower, not raise, her duties to bring in the fresh wind of competition, they argue. . . .The Government will be bitterly attacked by the international trading community if the surcharge is not wiped out by the end of the year." That was on June 13. On June 16 Mr. Farnsworth and the *Times* had a different story (naturally presented without the least apology for having been totally wrong three days earlier). "BRITAIN'S DEFICIT IN TRADE DEEPENS," ran the headline that day, "EXPORTS DROP WHILE IMPORTS SHOW SHARP INCREASE—STOCKS REGISTER A DIP." Below this warning, Mr. Farnsworth, in a cable dated June 15, complacently proceeded to eat his words of the week before. "Britain's trading position worsened last month with exports declining and imports rising to the highest level since records were kept," he told his readers. "Special factors, the Government was quick to point out, accounted for the import rise. May was the first full month to feel the effects of the cut in the import surcharge from 15 to 10 per cent. The surcharge had been imposed last October as an emergency measure to keep imports from rising. Foreign traders delayed exports to Britain until after the first reduction in the charge on April 27." So the wicked import surcharge did have some sense to it after all, and its premature reduction in April (largely due to the pressure of the City and the "international trading community") was at least partly responsible for the disastrous worsening of the trade gap.

In the rest of his June 15 cable, Mr. Farnsworth imperturbably backpedaled from his optimism of the previous week. "The failure of exports to maintain the advance of the first quarter was the most dismaying feature of the trade figures, experts said" (did he need an expert to tell him that?), "especially after exhortations and incentives from the Government." This concluding remark was strictly nonsensical, a mechanical tribute to the tribal taboos of the business community, which invariably blames the Government for its own incapacity. The fact is—and if Mr. Farnsworth doesn't know it, one wonders what he has been doing in England all this time—that

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British industry is not sufficiently competitive, for reasons that official "exhortations and incentives" cannot cure. "The trade figures" (he went on) "came as something of an embarrassment to high Government officials who recently have been saying that Britain had turned the economic corner" (and who had been duly echoed by Mr. Farnsworth). "But no new emergency measures are expected to be taken, unless the trading position continues to worsen later in the year." Readers who still remembered his earlier dispatch must by now have been thoroughly confused.

As it happens, there was no need to go out on that particular limb. The British Board of Trade issues its figures in the middle of each month. A statement was due on June 15, and while no one could foresee that it was going to be as bad as it turned out, it would have been wise to wait before rushing into print with an optimistic report three days earlier. It is true that the story the *Times* printed on June 13 contained mostly "background material." It is also true that its forecasts were quite wrong, and its interpretation remarkably silly and platitudinous.

So much for the paper's international expertise. A particularly bad week? No, just an average one, which I happen to have picked.

IV

Lastly there is the matter of ordinary relevance or topicality. By this I mean the choice which the editors make among the mass of material that reaches them: the stories they select as particularly newsworthy, the prominence given to reports on the front page or elsewhere. After all, a good many readers probably content themselves with a glance at the headlines. Even those who take the trouble to read foreign correspondents' dispatches normally pick out the ones that are featured, unless the reader happens to be a specialist in one particular subject (we have seen what he is likely to find if he gets more deeply into it). For practical purposes, a daily newspaper like the *Times* may be said to be performing its prime task if its readers can at a glance discover what is going on in the world around the United States. Can they?

On the face of it, the answer seems to be in the affirmative. Isn't the *Times* the only paper which literally prints *everything*? But the matter is not as simple as it seems, for it involves some judgment of what is, or is not, important. It may be that Mr. Robert Wagner's decision not to run again for the mayoralty of New York was for some people genuinely the most important event to have taken place in the month of June (the announcement of this decision blocked the entire front-page of the *Times* on June 11 and a fair number of inside pages as well). The *Times*, after all, is a local, not a national, paper. The United States indeed has no national daily (unless it be the *Wall Street Journal*). One knows the explanation: the country is too big and decentralized, etc. A critic who normally makes his home in London, where *all* the dailies are "national," must take this into account. He must also remember that he is dealing with facts *and* values. One can point at a piece of sky and say, "This is blue," in the expectation that other people will agree, but one cannot be equally certain where the relevance of a newspaper report is concerned. Personal and national blinkers come in. All the same, when a newspaper aims at world status, it enters a particular kind of competition, in which size and weight are not the most important criteria. How does the *Times* shape up compared with other leading journals so far as the relevance of its international news coverage goes?

Suppose we take three successive days—June 17, 18, and 19—and then see what kind of emphasis was given to the day's events by the *Times* and by other dailies in the competition—such as the London *Times* and *Telegraph*, and the Paris *Figaro* and *Le Monde*. On the first day, June 17, more than five out of eight news columns on the front page of the New York *Times* were given over to domestic affairs, ranging in importance from the proposal to establish a Cabinet-level department of housing and urban affairs to the slaying of a taxi driver in Brownsville. The remaining space was taken up by cables from Saigon and Santo Domingo, plus a Washington report on the sending of additional troop reinforcements to Vietnam. It may thus be fairly said that the nation's affairs were adequately covered, with the corollary that foreign countries appeared only in the role of being occupied by American troops. This last, of course, runs counter to the paper's editorial line, so that the prominence allotted to Vietnamese and Dominican affairs might be read as an implied criticism of the administration's involvement in those parts. Though I am willing to place this construction upon the matter, it seems to me more likely that the responsible news editors quite simply thought the rest of the world less important.

News from various Asian and European countries appeared on the inside pages, some prominence being given to a minor shooting affray in Kashmir, along the unsettled border between India and Pakistan. Further along, on page 8, one learned from the redoubtable Clyde H. Farnsworth, now doubling as legal correspondent, that the law authorities in Britain had made a change in an ancient provision permitting judges to impose discretionary terms of imprisonment for contempt of court. A British decision to allow international inspection of nuclear plants, and a West German parliamentary debate on proposed emergency legislation "for a time of war or national crisis" were recorded on pages 9 and 10, while on page 11 General de Gaulle was reported from Versailles to have told the citizens of a town-

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ship in the region that France needed political stability to fulfill its destiny. This destiny (one learned by perusing the report) was "to act as a counterweight to the two leading world powers, the United States and the Soviet Union." Further down in the same report (altogether occupying two-thirds of a column) one discovered that the French Foreign Minister had addressed Parliament on the ticklish subject of Franco-American relations. His speech, which was summed up in two brief paragraphs, appeared to have culminated in a profession of friendship. "It is simply ridiculous," he was quoted as saying, "to think that her [France's] objective is only to be unexplicably [*sic*] unfriendly to a great friendly nation." France had taken a position on Vietnam "only because the conflict may endanger world peace," while as for Santo Domingo, "France found herself unable to condone military intervention." End of paragraph and of story.

The rest of the world's news that day was more or less routine: a brief account of the latest UN debate on the situation in Santo Domingo; a cable from Jerusalem on Mr. Ben Gurion's political prospects; a message from Johannesburg on a squabble between the Dutch and South African governments over a fund to aid political prisoners; anti-Semitic vandalism in the South German town of Bamberg; and a somewhat surprising film note from Moscow about a movie which for once did *not* blame the Jews for all the crime in the Soviet Union ("SOVIET FILM DEPICTS THE SECRET POLICE AS HUMANE—JEWS' INVOLVEMENT BYPASSED IN MOVIE BASED UPON ECONOMIC-CRIME CASES"). And that was the international news for June 17. The remainder of the front section, all 34 pages of it, including the bulk of the editorial page, was devoted to home affairs, ranging from Senator Goldwater's views on Vietnam to the troubles of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the usual flurry of local news, theater news, and a few marriage announcements.

TURN NOW FOR comparison to newspapers abroad. The London *Daily Telegraph* of June 17 quite properly and understandably led off with Mr. McNamara's announcement about troop shipments to Vietnam. This was the front-page "lead story"; it was followed up by British political and economic news, including the inevitable official statement that despite the poor trade figures in May, "a basically healthier position in our balance of payments is being established." When one turned to the other main news page, (which in the *Telegraph* appears at the back), one discovered that the French President's speech of the day before had not left the British unmoved. "DE GAULLE CONDEMNS U.S. INTERVENTION—EUROPEAN UNITY CALL," the headline ran in large type along two columns, and underneath one found the story which the *Times* had buried in its inside pages: notably the passage where the General had compared the means whereby the USA and the USSR were extending their influence. "One and the other seek to spread their hegemony well beyond their frontiers," in the one case by imposing a totalitarian regime upon satellites, in the other "by other means, assuredly less deplorable and painful, which consist in offering protection to others, offering them aid, and intervening if necessary with military force, as we see presently in Vietnam, Laos, and the Dominican Republic." Did the *Times* editors hide this report inconspicuously away because they felt that de Gaulle was going a bit too far?

The French, needless to say, do not suffer from such inhibitions. For *Le Monde* (otherwise mildly critical of the President's home and foreign policy) the speech was front-page news. *Le Monde* also featured two other items which the *Times* did not think newsworthy: a French move in Brussels to fix 1970 (instead of 1967) as the date for the joint administration of the Common Market's customs revenues, and an extensive forecast of what the French Finance Minister's views would be during his forthcoming visit to London, where he was to meet his British colleague, Mr. James Callaghan, and to unveil the French plan for reforming the world monetary system. There was no mention of this topic in the New York *Times* on that day, nor for that matter on the following day (June 18) when the London *Times* ran a two-column center-page spread on Britain's financial difficulties and Mr. Callaghan's projected visit to Washington and Ottawa (June 26-9). That visit, it appeared, had political as well as financial implications. As the Washington correspondent of the (London) *Times* put it, under a prominently displayed headline on the main June 18 news page ("U.S. CONCERN OVER BRITISH ROLE EAST OF SUEZ"), Mr. Callaghan was likely to get a sympathetic hearing in Washington, on condition that he did not propose to ease his country's monetary difficulties by reducing British defense commitments in Southeast Asia. "Apart from America's efforts to balance its own external payments, which have not been altogether successful, there are influential officials who would strongly object to any British attempt to achieve national solvency by reducing defense costs. They have especially in mind the British commitment east of Suez. It was forcefully said today that Britain has a moral responsibility to carry this particular white man's burden. The United States would not assume responsibilities east of Suez, should they be abandoned by Britain."

All this, one supposes, might have been of interest also to readers of the New York *Times*, had they been told about it—which they were not. By June 19 the paper had caught up at least to the extent of mentioning the Anglo-French financial talks in London. It ran a brief cable in its business section summarizing Mr. Callaghan's own

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statement on the monetary position and adding some speculation about what the British Chancellor might ask the U.S. Treasury to do in order to ease the shortage of dollars resulting from recent U.S. actions. The French were said to have "emphasized a new flexibility in the . . . approach toward reforming the international monetary structure," but no hint was given as to what they were being flexible about. And that was all. Not a word about the threatened scaling-down of British defense commitments, and nothing about the reported American refusal to carry more of the white man's burden "east of Suez"—meaning in Southeast Asia (Singapore and the Indian Ocean, to be specific).

BACK TO the Continent. *Le Monde* on June 18 still thought the French President's four-day tour of the Paris region headline news: a pardonable touch of national egoism. It prominently reported him as having told the citizens of Meaux (Seine-et-Marne) the day before that "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals can become the capital element of civilization and progress." The Paris *Figaro* also thought this newsworthy, though in an editorial that day (the 25th anniversary of de Gaulle's historic appeal for resistance against the Germans in 1940) it dissociated itself from the President's political line, while praising his past achievements. The New York *Times* ignored the anniversary (a big day in France) and ran a brief, garbled report of the President's provincial tour at the bottom of page 7, under an inconspicuous heading ("DE GAULLE MOVING NEARER CANDIDACY"). From this one learned that "he ended a review of his estimate of the state of France and the world by recalling the 25 years that, he said, he has [*sic*] represented the destiny of France." Aside from constituting an assault on syntax—hardly a proper tribute to the General's faultless style—this piece of balderdash managed to conceal from readers what de Gaulle had really said. Neither were they told that his criticism of the U.S. had been developed at much greater length the day before by his Foreign Minister in the French Assembly. For contrary to the impression left on readers by a two-paragraph resumé printed by the *Times* on June 17, M. Couve de Murville had expressed himself at great length and with considerable forthrightness. He had, for example, expatiated in detail upon the theme of a new European equilibrium "from the Atlantic to the Urals." He had also had this to say:

> In Vietnam what is at stake is the fate of a people to whom we are deeply attached. What is probably at stake too, for a long time to come, is the future relationship between the white and colored peoples, at any rate in Asia. The peace of the world may also be concerned, for whatever may be said, America and China are at grips there.

The remainder of the speech dealt with European integration, the future of the Common Market, and the need for an "independent Europe." It was probably the most important declaration made by a French Foreign Minister in years, and the most complete exposition yet given of Gaullist policies in Europe and Asia. The account of the statement and the subsequent debate filled two entire pages in *Le Monde*. The New York *Times* report on June 17 (from Mr. Henry Kamm) summarized it in two wholly misleading sentences, which for good measure were buried in an inside page.

An oversight? Then why was it not made good the next day, June 18? On that day the *Times* carried exactly *one* item of foreign news on its front page: an account of Mr. Harold Wilson's effort to set up a "peace mission" on Vietnam. For the rest one had the usual diet: Saigon, Santo Domingo, and home affairs. The inside pages carried reports from Moscow ("KHRUSHCHEV AIDE LOSES FARM POST"), Havana ("CASTRO IS CRYPTIC ABOUT GUEVARA'S WHEREABOUTS"), New Delhi ("U.S. URGES INDIA PULL BACK FORCE") and Bonn ("'53 GERMAN RISING MARKED IN WEST") but not a whisper from Paris, only the silly cable from de Gaulle's provincial tour already mentioned. Adequate reporting?

On June 19, though, Paris was back in the news: Vice-President Humphrey had arrived there on a goodwill mission, and that rated the front page of the *Times*. (No other foreign news did, save for a brief item on the apparent collapse of M. Defferre's efforts). Mr. Humphrey, it appeared, was going to call on the General and try to remove his anti-American prejudices. This provided a theme for yet another *Times* correspondent in Paris, Mr. Henry Tanner. Improving on Mr. Kamm's efforts of two days earlier, he reverted briefly to Couve de Murville's speech of the 16th, of which he gave the following one-sentence résumé: "On Thursday, Foreign Minister Maurice Couve de Murville, surveying French foreign policy before the National Assembly, declared that this policy 'was not inspired by any desire to oppose the United States of America, our friends and protectors.'" My eyesight may have failed me, but I did not discover this phrase in any of the accounts given in the French press. In any case a platitude of this kind (assuming that it had been uttered) told one nothing about the real import of Couve de Murville's hour-long speech—a veritable declaration of independence, plus an impassioned appeal to the other European nations to follow France's lead. This kind of reporting might be tolerable on the Liverpool *Daily Echo* (though from my reading of the British provincial press I do not believe it would in fact be tolerated). It seems hardly good enough for the New York *Times*. Besides, Franco-American relations were just then in the center of the picture: everyone was commenting on how

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bad they appeared to be. To have ignored or garbled the most important French policy statement in many months, at this particular moment, constitutes something of a negative achievement.

I CAN HEAR the rejoinder: do British and French papers invariably report important American utterances? Probably not as fully as they should, but they rarely ignore or misunderstand the gist of a Presidential statement. Besides, the New York *Times* does not suffer from their space limitations. It is indeed quite willing to print the full text of even the silliest speech made by some local bigwig at home. What it persistently fails to do is to acquaint its readers with the real drift of affairs abroad, notably when that drift—and this is where a kind of censorship appears to come in—runs counter to the editorial frame of reference. Thus during all the months when the British were plainly failing to secure entry into the Common Market, the paper's readers obtained no adequate picture of the balance of forces in Western Europe. Thus, too, the strength of Gaullism was persistently underrated, and the General himself consigned to perdition (with no visible effect on his standing at home) once he had turned out to be an obstacle to "Atlanticism." Soviet affairs have for years been reported in such a manner as to leave the reader with the impression that the USA and the USSR are pretty much alike, except that the Russians suffer from a shortage of consumer goods. The coverage of Latin America invariably stresses the bright side—economic growth, where it can be discovered—and leaves the paper's readers bewildered at the spectacle of revolutionary nationalism in its various forms (not all of them Communist or Castroite).

Over-all, there is an almost total neglect of the intellectual sphere, notably as it relates to the collective outlook of the rising generation. Students appear in the role of demonstrators or troublemakers: they are rarely considered as carriers of new ideas and attitudes. Yet any competent observer of the European or Latin American scene knows that the ferment among the young (especially at the universities) is more significant than a good deal of the standard official phrasemaking. As Mr. Theodore Draper has remarked (with reference to Latin America), both conservatives and radicals tend to come from the same social milieu, and the current wave of radicalism in certain areas is largely a revolt of the educated younger generation against its own parents. But the kind of reporting-in-depth for which Mr. Draper has won recognition is just the sort of writing that is almost never to be found in what purports to be the country's leading newspaper.

One could go on, but one day is pretty much like the next, so far as the handling of foreign news by the *Times* is concerned. The over-all impression—a compound of ignorance, provincialism, and plain incompetence—remains the same year after year. Others may have a different picture. I shall be told that the *Times* has virtues unsuspected by foreigners. That is doubtless true; it must be true, seeing that the paper takes itself so seriously. I merely register a dissent from the seemingly widespread notion that it is an inexhaustible source of relevant information about what passes abroad. Inexhaustible it may be, but the relevance of its coverage leaves something to be desired.

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DAVID DAICHES

PRESENTING THE BIBLE

SOMETHING UNDER four thousand years ago a troubled citizen of the Central Mesopotamian city of Haran left the community in which he had been born and brought up to wander westward to the country that was later known as Palestine. The Hurrian society from which he became a voluntary refugee had long been subject to Babylonian influence and was part of a complex of Mesopotamian civilization whose nature is now reasonably well known to scholars from a variety of records and texts. Cosmopolitan, stable, sophisticated, law-abiding, with flourishing literary and scientific activities, an exciting architecture, enlightened agricultural methods and prospering commercial enterprises—this is the picture that modern scholarship has built up. Was this a civilization for a sensible and sensitive man to flee from? Perhaps its very stability and prosperity oppressed him; perhaps the complex but smooth-running machinery of political and ethical life left out too much. For it was a spiritual quest on which the wanderer set out. In embarking on it he began what the late Professor Ephraim A. Speiser, in his introduction to the Anchor Bible Genesis, calls "the biblical process." In Abraham's belief that he had been called from his native land to seek a new way of life elsewhere lies the beginning of that extraordinary historical and religious development that produced the story of the Patriarchs, of Joseph in Egypt, of the Exodus, of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the subsequent history of Israel and Judah, the progress of Judaism, and the emergence of Christianity. The Bible, and biblical history, and all the consequences of biblical history, begin in fact with Abraham's migration.

The great medieval Jewish biblical commentator Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (generally known as Rashi), looking at the five Books of Moses in traditional Jewish fashion as the Torah, the Law, remarked at the beginning of his commentary on Genesis that the Torah should really have commenced not with the story of the Creation but with the second verse of the twelfth chapter of Exodus, where the first actual precept is found. He added, however, that the earlier parts were necessary to show to the world the divine claim of the Jewish people to their Palestinian homeland. But if one looks at the whole biblical process, one is inclined to disagree both with Rashi and with those ancient biblical writers and editors who apparently adapted Babylonian accounts of primeval history to provide as it were a cosmic introduction to the story of Abraham's quest and its consequences. "The biblical process" begins neither with chapter 1 of Genesis nor with chapter 12 of Exodus: it begins with the divine words recorded in Genesis 12: 1-3 as having sounded in Abraham's ears while he still lived in his native Haran. *Lech lecha*—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee." That is the familiar King James rendering, and certainly "get thee out" captures the pithy forcefulness of the Hebrew *lech lecha*. Speiser, rightly seeing this divine message as a little inset poem, translates thus:

Go forth from your native land
And from your father's home
To a land that I will show you.
I will make of you a great nation,
Bless you, and make great your name,
That it may be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And curse those who curse you;
And through you shall bless themselves
All the communities on earth.

So Abraham and his wife and his nephew, with all their possessions, "set out for the land of Canaan and arrived in the land of Canaan."

But is it true? Was there a real, historical Abraham who really did leave his native Haran for the land of Canaan in obedience to a sense of divine call to engage in a spiritual quest? The paradox is that the evidence provided by all those modern tools of research into the Bible that are so shunned by right-wing Jewish Orthodoxy—the evidence of history, anthropology, textual criticism, comparative religion, linguistic scholarship—is on Abraham's side. The Bible says that Abraham migrated from Haran to the land of

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Canaan, and there is abundant evidence in the text of Genesis that the narrator of the story of the patriarchs was dealing with an original Hurrian character in a non-Hurrian context so that he did not understand the meaning of the Hurrian customs that he was recording. Abraham twice, and Isaac once, claimed that his wife was his sister when visiting a foreign notable. The three accounts in the Bible remain puzzling, and cast little credit on either patriarch. But Speiser explains that "in Hurrian society a wife enjoyed special standing and protection when the law recognized her simultaneously as her husband's sister, regardless of actual blood ties. Such cases are attested by two separate legal documents, one dealing with the marriage and the other with the woman's adoption as sister. This dual role conferred on the wife a superior position in society." Now Abraham, who originally came from the old Hurrian center of Haran, was of course familiar with Hurrian social practices. "Hence when he and his son, in visits to foreign lands, spoke of their wives as sisters, they were apparently intent not so much on improving their own prospects as on extolling and protecting their wives." It is important to note that "these particular wife-sister customs were peculiar to the Hurrians." The author of the accounts in Genesis of Abraham and Isaac claiming that their wives were their sisters clearly hadn't a clue as to what it all meant and was forced to invent the only plausible (and unfortunately rather discreditable) reason for this odd behavior that he could think of. Only if we imagine a later writer producing in the land of Israel (Canaan) an account of genuine old traditions some of which, being Hurrian, he could not understand, can we find any convincing explanation of this and other oddities in Genesis.

The Hurrian origin of the patriarchs is further evidenced by the puzzling story of Jacob's tricking Esau out of the eldest son's blessing. "On this point we now have pertinent illustrations in the Hurrian sources from Nuzi, which in turn mirror social conditions and customs in the patriarchal center at Haran. Birthright in Hurrian society was often a matter of the father's discretion rather than chronological priority. Moreover, of all the paternal dispositions, the one that took the form of a death-bed declaration carried the greatest weight." The whole situation recorded in the 27th chapter of Genesis, continues Speiser, reflects "an old and authentic usage," and he refers to the relevant supporting documents in the Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research and elsewhere. "On the socio-legal level . . . the account is a correct measure of early relations between Hurrians and Hebrews."

Again, in chapter 28 of Genesis Jacob leaves Beer-sheba and sets out for his grandfather's birthplace, Haran, to escape Esau's anger and find a wife (as his father had done) from among his relations there. He returns, that is, to Mesopotamia, though of course only temporarily. It is on his way there that he has his famous dream in which he sees a stairway set on the ground, with its top reaching the sky. On waking, he exclaims: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven!" (Speiser's translation.) He calls the place where he had the dream Bethel, or House of God. Is it a coincidence that on this journey to Mesopotamia Jacob dreams of something remarkably like a Mesopotamian temple tower or ziggurat? "For a ziggurat rose hard by the main temple on the ground . . . to provide on its summit a place for the deity to visit . . . and communicate there with mortals: a spiritual symbol, in short, of man's efforts to reach out to heaven." So Speiser comments, and he adds: "The phraseology is much too typical of the temple tower to be merely coincidental, and the underlying imagery cannot be mistaken." The irresistible conclusion is that the author of this passage is reporting an authentic tradition.

In chapter 29, similarly, we are told how Laban, Jacob's maternal uncle, gives Jacob his daughter Leah in marriage, though Jacob was really in love with her younger sister Rachel; later in the same chapter Jacob gets Rachel too. In each case the narrator sticks in the parenthetical note that with the daughter Laban handed over a maid to wait on her. "Laban had assigned his maid-servant Zilpah as maid to his daughter Leah." "Laban had assigned his maid-servant Bilhah as maid to his daughter Rachel." These brief interpolated sentences have their exact parallel in the Nuzi tablets; in a document printed in the Harvard Semitic Series (V. no. 67), dealing in part "with a marriage involving a young woman of high standing in the local community," we find that, after all the relevant details have been set out, the text adds parenthetically: "Moreover, Yalampa [a slave girl] is herewith assigned to Gilimninu [the bride] as her maid." The authenticity of the custom is thus vouched for.

Lastly, in chapter 31 we find the puzzling story of Rachel stealing her father's household images when Jacob and his family finally return from Haran to Canaan. The significance of the incident can now be seen to derive "from underlying social practices as they bear on the nature of the patriarchal narratives in general. According to the Nuzi documents, which have been found to reflect time and again the social customs of Haran, possession of the house gods could signify legal title to a given estate, particularly in cases out of the ordinary, involving daughters, sons-in-law, or adopted sons."

This is only a selection of those passages in Genesis which remain puzzling or meaningless until seen as the recording of Hurrian customs by a Hebrew writer who had lost touch with their original meaning and purpose. If all this does not

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prove beyond any possible doubt that a man called Abraham (or Abram, as we are told his name originally was) left Haran for the land of Canaan about 1700 B.C.E., it certainly helps to authenticate the traditions recorded in Genesis and confirms the biblical view of Abraham's origins. Nothing, in fact, in Genesis is inconsistent with the historicity of Abraham, and there is considerable external supporting evidence for the basic truth of the biblical account of the patriarchs' migrations and questings.

IT IS THIS deft and scholarly use of supporting material out of the abundance of his own knowledge of the whole world of the ancient Middle East that makes Speiser's notes and comments in the first volume of the enormously ambitious Anchor Bible* so illuminating and indeed so exciting. To translate the text afresh in the light of the best modern knowledge and to reconstruct the background with every available tool of scholarship is the aim of this series, and it could not have got off to a better start. On the question of translation, the editor of each volume has had to make his own decision. On the whole the editors of the six Old Testament volumes here considered agree in preferring accuracy to liturgical grace, in jettisoning the antique if beautiful forms of the King James Bible and its later revisions in favor of starting from scratch with an appropriate modern English, and at the same time in giving some clear indication of the nature of the literary form to be found in the original.

Some surprises result. It may come as a shock to the layman to be told that the very first words of the Bible do not mean "In the beginning." The text as vocalized by the Masorites (the Jewish editors who preserved and normalized the text of the Hebrew Bible, which they fixed about the 2nd century C.E., though they did not develop the full vocalization for another four centuries or so) shows the opening word as clearly in the "construct" form, meaning "in the beginning of." Speiser renders the opening thus: "When God set about to create heaven and earth—the world being then a formless waste, with darkness over the seas and only an awesome wind sweeping over the water—God said, 'Let there be light.' And there was light." This should not disturb Jewish scholars who know (or should know) that both Rashi and Ibn Ezra suggested a similar rendering. "In the beginning of God's creating the heaven and earth . . ." is the meaning according to Rashi, which is also how Speiser understands it—though he does not give Rashi's further reason for repudiating the traditional translation, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," which was that it is clear from verse 2 that God did *not* first create heaven and earth, but rather the waters. The modern scholar is less concerned to eliminate apparent inconsistencies than to use them as evidence of different hands engaged in the composition of the narrative.

No modern scholar can discuss Genesis without giving some account of the cogent evidence suggesting the different hands in the book. Speiser presents a scholarly and balanced summary of this evidence, and while some of his attributions must inevitably remain problematical, there can be little doubt in the mind of the unprejudiced reader that the different versions of the same story, differences in style and vocabulary, differences in main preoccupations and attitude, and differences in point of view (such as the extraordinary chapter 14, where we suddenly, and for the only time, get an outside view of "Abram the Hebrew" as a prosperous chief who can mobilize his own army at short notice), all add up to proof of multiplicity of authorship. Genesis, like all of the first books of the Bible, is a carefully wrought compilation from a variety of sources. Once again we are faced with the paradox that a recognition of this increases our admiration for what has actually been achieved in that remarkable book, just as our awareness of the Babylonian origins of the Creation and the Flood stories enhances our wonder at the radically different tone and meaning imposed on the material by the biblical authors. Speiser links these differences with Abraham's protest against the Mesopotamian civilization from which he withdrew. "The migration . . . was in protest against the local religious solution [*sic;* "situation"?]. And reflections of that protest can still be detected throughout the account of Primeval History. *P's*† statement about Creation differs from its Mesopotamian analogue by its overriding concept of an omnipotent Creator. *J's*† version of the Flood receives a moral motivation. Most revealing of all is the same writer's narrative about the Tower of Babel. The scene of the episode is Babylon itself, and some passages in that story read as though the author had had the Babylonian prototype before him. Yet the purpose of the tale is not a direct though unacknowledged transcript, but a stern criticism of the builders' monumental presumption."

Of the three main authors of Genesis who can be identified, *P* is distinguished by his use of *Elohim* and *El Shaddai* for God, by his interest in genealogies, and by his concern for the purity of the line through which God implemented His purpose; *J* is the great storyteller, who handles

* The Anchor Bible, under the general editorship of William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, Doubleday (there will be 38 volumes in all). Genesis, translated with an Introduction and Notes by E. A. Speiser, $6.00; I Chronicles, Translation, Introduction, and Notes by Jacob M. Myers, $6.00; II Chronicles, Translation, Introduction, and Notes by Jacob M. Myers, $5.00; Jeremiah, translated with an Introduction and Notes by John Bright, $7.00; Job, Introduction, Translation, and Notes by Marvin H. Pope, $6.00; Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Introduction, Translation, and Notes by R. B. Y. Scott, $6.00.

† See below for an explanation of *P*, *J*, and *E*.

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the Joseph story so magnificently, and he uses the tetragrammaton YHWH for God; *E* is also a good storyteller, though not so lively and individual as *J*, interested in dreams as God's way of communicating with man, and inclined to elaborate explanation and justification of the actions of his characters. The mysterious name of God, YHWH, has traditionally been translated "the Lord" in English versions, following the age-old Jewish custom of reading it as *"Adonai,"* "my lord (s)." The name itself was in Jewish tradition ineffable and not to be spoken except once a year in a moment of great awe by the High Priest. Whether it was ever pronounced "Yahweh" by the earliest readers of any part of the Bible is surely doubtful. The old Hebrew tradition of putting the vowels of *"Adonai"* under the consonants YHWH to show that the word should be read *"Adonai"* suggests an ancient inhibition. (It was a misunderstanding of this shorthand device that led Renaissance Christian Hebraists to read the word as "Jehovah," a non-existent name and a philological monstrosity.) The translators of all these volumes regularly render YHWH as "Yahweh": I confess that this makes me feel slightly uncomfortable.

The general problem presented by translating from biblical Hebrew into modern English is difficult. The two languages are so very different in sound, structure, and behavior. By means of a system of prefixes and suffixes Hebrew can compress into a single word what it may take three or four to express in English. The whole concept of verbal tenses is radically different from English and indeed from Indo-European languages in general. Many idioms, if rendered literally, may sound picturesque but may well give quite a wrong impression of the true meaning. A word or even a phrase may change its meaning in virtue of a difference in context, and to render them identically on each occasion when they occur may result in mistranslation.

In addition to these and similar problems, there are the problems presented by the state of the text itself. For the fixing of the Hebrew text by the Masorites, while it provided a stable text, did not necessarily provide a consistently accurate one. A long process of transmission, some of it originally oral, had been going on for many centuries before the Masorites got to work; such an extended interval always implies some degree of corruption. The problems presented by the text of the Hebrew Bible are bound up with the history and the transmission of this diverse anthology of Hebrew religious literature (for the Hebrew Bible is nothing less than that). The Masoretic text (MT) represents a late stage in the development of the biblical text and it has come down to us in manuscripts of no great antiquity. The Septuagint, the Greek translation made from a pre-Masoretic Hebrew text centuries before MT was established, points to an underlying Hebrew which sometimes differs from and sometimes may be superior to MT. One of the problems of the modern translator is to get behind MT where it is obviously or even possibly corrupt. So long as MT is regarded as sacrosanct, as it is by Jewish Orthodoxy (even though there are cases where pre-Masoretic readings are preserved in the Talmud), textual scholarship is limited.

Among the numerous differences between the Anchor Bible and the attractively produced Soncino Books of the Bible put out by the Soncino Press in England in the 1940's is that the latter, edited by Jewish rabbis and ministers throughout, sticks to MT and never seeks to emend or get behind it. The Soncino Bible prints the Hebrew as well as the English (in the translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America) and its commentary is less academic, or at least less rigorously professional, aimed more at the religious layman. In this respect it resembles more the volumes of the Pentateuch put out under the general editorship of the late J. H. Hertz, British Chief Rabbi, which are conservative and edifying rather than genuinely scholarly and, while attractively produced for the worshipper, skate over and sometimes simply ignore the really difficult and disturbing problems. It must be admitted that, with some notable exceptions, of which the Anchor Genesis is one, Christian scholarship on the Hebrew Bible has been more enterprising and often more genuinely scholarly than Jewish scholarship on the same subject has been. The Anchor Bible, where Jewish scholars contribute some volumes and Protestant and Catholic scholars contribute others, provides a fine proving ground for the biblical scholarship of all three groups.

GENESIS IS THE first book of the Bible for both Jews and Christians. The name "Genesis" is of course Greek, and was first given to it by the Greek translators of the Septuagint in the 3rd century B.C.E. In Hebrew it is known by its first word, *bereshit*, "In the beginning" (or, more accurately, as we have seen, "In the beginning of"—a good example of how Hebrew can get into one word what English has to do in four). It combines Primeval History with Patriarchal History and brings the story up to the settlement of the Children of Israel in the land of Goshen and the death of Joseph. The three following books of the Hebrew Bible deal with the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, the wandering in the wilderness, and further details of legal and ritual enactments. But the fifth book —the last book of the Pentateuch, the last of the so-called Five Books of Moses, the final volume of the Torah in the Orthodox Jewish view—is rather different. While in many respects the first four constitute a unity and the same hands can be traced in each of them, the fifth, Deuteronomy, appears as we have it to be the work of a writer who was trying to recall Israel to the fundamental principles of the Mosaic Law and worship of the

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one God; it was a reformist manifesto gathering up, recapitulating, classifying, reaffirming the religion of Moses partly under the inspiration of the idealism of the prophets Hosea and Isaiah.

It is important to recall the historical background. The Children of Israel (to give them the traditional biblical name) finally conquered the original inhabitants of Canaan and settled there, in accordance with the primal promise made to Abraham. Their Golden Age was the era of David and Solomon (10th century B.C.E.) when those great kings successively ruled over an Israelite empire which fell apart on the death of Solomon (c. 922 B.C.E.) into the northern kingdom of Israel with its capital eventually at Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem. For two hundred years those tiny (by modern standards) kingdoms survived side by side, sometimes in enmity and sometimes in alliance, enabled to do so because, as Professor John Bright points out in his introduction to the Anchor Jeremiah, the world situation permitted it. "One must realize that Israel's entire history since her occupation of Palestine had until this time been spun out in a great power vacuum; it was one of those interludes in which no world empire existed—neither in the Nile Valley, nor in Mesopotamia, nor elsewhere."

But in the second half of the 8th century B.C.E. things began to change; the accession to the Assyrian throne of Tiglath-pileser III inaugurated Assyria's period of empire. Israel, reduced to a tributary kingdom by Tiglath-pileser in the course of that king's conquest of all western Asia, was finally destroyed by Tiglath-pileser's successor Shalmaneser V in c. 722 B.C.E. Samaria was totally destroyed, and the inhabitants of Israel carried off into exile whence they never returned: they were eventually absorbed into their new environment and disappeared from history—though some may have trickled into Judah later. Judah carried on, but as an Assyrian dependency after 734 B.C.E., its kings alternately vainly trying to throw off Assyrian domination by alliance with Egypt or (like King Manasseh, so detested by the author of the Book of Kings) submitting voluntarily to Assyria and imitating Assyrian ways.

This naturally threatened the traditional religion, for the Jews seem to have been only too ready to give way at almost any time to idolatrous practices and cults from other nations. It was Manasseh's grandson Josiah who tried to stop the rot and restore his people to the true religion of the God of Israel. In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign (i.e., 622), according to Kings, a copy of "the book of the law" was discovered in the Temple while repairs were being made there. The book was read to the king, and it gave further impetus to his religious reforms. It was clearly some form of Deuteronomy, whose reformist author or reviser went on to produce the historical books of the Bible from Joshua through II Kings. The work of the Deuteronomist (as this author is now called) had as its aim, in the words of Professor Jacob M. Myers, editor of the Anchor Chronicles, "to exhibit the effectiveness of the word of the Lord in Israel's history, both as judgment and salvation, and to foster the hope of a revitalization of the promise to David, in the face of a weakening Assyria if king and people heeded the lessons of the past." For Assyria, at the very moment of her greatest expansion, was beginning her decline and fall. Religious reform and feeling for national independence went together, as so often in Israel's history. (It should be noted that although the northern kingdom of Israel had now disappeared, the term "Israel" still existed and was still in use—as it is today—to describe those of the ancient people who retained their identity. The "ten lost tribes" of the northern kingdom were not in fact ten distinct tribes at the time of the Assyrian conquest; the inhabitants of Judah took over the whole inheritance of Israel.)

The work of the Deuteronomist presented Israel with a problem that was to engage the attention of many of the Hebrew Prophets. Would adherence to the Mosaic Law, as recapitulated and reaffirmed in Deuteronomy, insure the preservation of national independence and identity? And if, in spite of Josiah's reforms, Assyria or some other pagan foreign power were to subdue the country and overthrow its institutions, would this mean that God's promises were false and the confidence that He would look after His people if they did His will had all along been misplaced?

MEANWHILE, the political situation was worsening. Assyria joined with Egypt in an attempt to check the rising power of Babylon; Josiah, either alone or in alliance with Babylon, tried to stop the joint Assyrian-Egyptian army, and was defeated and killed. In 598-7 the Babylonians marched against Judah and conquered it, though Nebuchadnezzar allowed the state to exist under Babylonian suzerainty; in 587, after a final Jewish rebellion, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and deported the population to Babylon. In 539 the conquering Cyrus the Great of Persia subdued Babylon and issued an edict allowing all the Jewish deportees and their descendants who so desired to return to Judah. The author of Chronicles wrote that it was the Lord who aroused the spirit of Cyrus to do this, and records his decree in this way: "Thus has Cyrus the king of Persia said: Yahweh God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build for him a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever among you belongs to all his people, may Yahweh his God be with him and let him go up." (Myers's translation.)

The Deuteronomist had tried to prove to the people that obedience to the Mosaic Law would preserve them in freedom and security. Professor

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Myers comments: "Deuteronomy may have contributed [to the religious and moral decline that followed the death of Josiah] by the creation of a misdirected sense of security on the part of officials who trusted in externals to the exclusion, or nearly so, of a deep inner commitment to the will of God." At any rate, Josiah's reforms had not preserved national independence. The author of Chronicles ("the Chronicler") set himself to rewrite the history of Israel from the death of Saul and the accession of David to the decree of Cyrus in order to serve the needs of the returned exiles. His object was threefold: "to demonstrate that the true Israel was the one perpetuated in Judah —the one which began in the Davidic kingdom, continued right through the history of Judah, and more to the point, was now represented in the exilic community"; to create the proper conditions for true religious worship and centralize it in Jerusalem; and to provide an institutional structure that could resist "the manifest political and social pressures exerted upon the new community." He drew on a variety of sources, including, of course, the historical books of the Deuteronomist, but selected, organized, and emphasized in his own way for his own purpose. "He did not," says Professor Myers, "deliberately distort history to fit his purpose; he employed those phases that were apropos and, at numerous points, he manifestly relied on sources sometimes more accurate than those used by the Deuteronomist. In view of that fact one cannot accuse him of writing imaginative history, as has been charged so often. That he had his own way of filling in the gaps, with some embellishments no doubt, was due to the interests of the cause. The political aspects of the Davidic line had come to an end and there was no hope of re-establishment, at least not so far as he could see. Hope for Israel lay in the fortification of the religious institutions that survived the tragic experiences of 587 B.C. and the long years of the Exile."

It is fascinating to go through Chronicles and, with the aid of Professor Myers's notes, see how the Chronicler has focused attention on David, Solomon, and the Temple cult in order to present to his people the kind of history that would best serve them in their crisis. The Chronicler was, says Professor Myers, "above all else a churchman of the highest order" whose aim was to help his people by strengthening "a living religious institution rather than through the royal messianism proclaimed by the prophets—a messianism which had signally failed in the early stages of the post-exilic community." The Hebrew Bible in its traditional Jewish ordering ends with Chronicles: this makes sense, for the Chronicler (who was probably also the author of Ezra and Nehemiah) recapitulated Jewish history in such a way as to provide the basis for the survival of the Jewish people as essentially a religious community, thus preparing them for the greater *Galut*. It is surely ironical that a work designed to help the exiles returned from Babylon to re-develop their national religious life in their own country should have in fact helped to prepare their descendants for permanent exile.

Professor Myers's edition of Chronicles lacks the fine verbal grace we find in Speiser's Genesis (both in introduction and translation): no one who persistently uses the word "returnees" can claim the highest linguistic sensitivity. But the translation of Chronicles does not call for any great stylistic subtlety, and Myers does a scholarly and workmanlike job. His introduction, if not a model of English prose, is consistently illuminating. He perhaps exaggerates, in the interests of clarity of presentation, the difference between the Chronicler's position and that of the prophets, whose message can certainly not be adequately summed up in the phrase "royal messianism." The prophets saw the little states of Judah and Israel caught up in the great power struggles of the time, and counseled a contracting out of the whole game of power politics in favor of concentration on practicing justice, mercy, and righteousness. Between the decline of the Davidic empire and the final fall of Jerusalem to Babylon, these extraordinary men, speaking with total conviction in the name of God, exhorted, warned, castigated, and comforted their people in the firm belief that goodness rather than political strength or cunning would save the nation. By the same token, if Israel was oppressed by an outside power, it was by the will of God, and the duty of the people was to return to God rather than to rebel. This was the anguished message of Jeremiah, who prophesied in Judah from the beginning of the period of Babylonian domination of the country until after the final Babylonian conquest and the carrying off of so many of the people into exile. In a sense he was a Quisling, a traitor, counseling submission to Babylon because he saw no way out through political or military resistance. Babylon was God's instrument: he was convinced of this. Yet the knowledge tortured him, and he spoke out only because he felt that God was urging him to do so. After the final victory of the Babylonians, the victors offered him specially favorable treatment if he would come to Babylon with them. They misunderstood him, as so many of his own people misunderstood him. He stayed with the remnant of his people in devastated Judah until forcibly taken to Egypt.

Professor John Bright, in his Anchor Jeremiah, paints in the historical background with a vigorous brush, covering some of the same material dealt with by Professor Myers in his introduction to Chronicles but with a different focus. The center of the picture remains Jeremiah, the reluctant prophet, castigating his people for their faithlessness to their God and for preferring mere ritual to ethical action, prophesying with horrified convic-

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tion the defeat and destruction that God had prepared for His faithless people, protesting against his own prophetic mission and cursing his fate that he should be born into such a world and entrusted with such a message, and in the end advising the exiles in Babylon to seek the welfare of the country to which they had been deported and comforting them with visions of future restoration.

The Book of Jeremiah, with its prophetic poems, its historical and biographical narrative, and its terrifying autobiographical outbursts, is far from orderly (either chronologically or logically) as we now have it, and Professor Bright does some useful explaining and rearranging, sorting out the different strands and relating them to their background. In his translation he seeks a mean between a wooden literalness and a paraphrase, endeavoring to put the sense of the original into clear modern English and at the same time, in the poetic passages, trying to give the reader some impression of the effect of Hebrew poetry by keeping the lines at about the same length as the original and keeping the same number of accented syllables. This last aim sometimes leads him to use contractions that sound a bit too colloquial, but more often there is an immense gain in immediacy. Compare the following:

King James: Be not dismayed at them.
Bright: Don't lose your nerve because of them.

* * *

King James: And they shall fight against
thee; but they shall not
prevail against thee.
Bright: Attack you they will; overcome you they
can't.

* * *

King James: And send unto Kedar and consider
diligently; and see if there hath
been such a thing.
Bright: Send out to Kedar and closely observe!
And see—was there ever the like?

* * *

King James: And my people love to have it so;
and what will ye do in the end
thereof?
Bright: And my people—they love it that way.
But what will you do when it ends?

* * *

King James: Oh that I had in the wilderness
a lodging place of wayfaring men;
that I might leave my people, and go
from them! for they be all adulterers,
an assembly of treacherous men.
Bright: O that I had in the desert
A wayfarer's lodge,
And so could leave my people,
Get away from them!
For they're all adulterers,
A gang of crooks.

"A gang of crooks" is an admirable rendering of the Hebrew *atseret bog'dim* and brings the phrase immediately out of the realm of the antique-poetic into that of vigorous market-place talk, which, after all, is what Jeremiah was engaged in.

The question of whether the prophets were right in believing that the practice of virtue could have saved the people from foreign domination—what does a small nation *do* when ringed round by mighty military powers?—may bother the modern reader, but it is worth noting that, in Professor Bright's words, "precisely in that Jeremiah's was a message of judgment, it was a saving message. By ruthlessly destroying false hope, by ceaselessly asserting that the tragedy was Yahweh's doing, his righteous judgment on the nation for its sin, Jeremiah as it were drew the national disaster within the framework of faith, and thus prevented it from destroying faith." The disaster proved not the death of God but the very present existence of God. In making the people see this, Jeremiah helped to lay down a basic article of creed that the Jewish people clung to through subsequent centuries. "And because of our sins we were exiled from our land" is a phrase repeated by Orthodox Jews every New Year (in the *musaph* service). Two thousand years of exile and intermittent persecution, culminating in the murder of the six million by Hitler, because of the sins of some remote ancestors? If Jeremiah had seen further into the future he would surely have been appalled, and been even more reluctant to prophesy than he in fact was, and the eloquent messages of future comfort that we find in chapters 30 and 31 might never have been announced.

JEREMIAH did not, however, accept the word of the Lord tamely; he not only protested against the burden laid on him but also questioned God directly about His treatment of him. But it was in a different kind of context that the intractable question of the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the innocent was most fully treated in biblical literature. Among the third division of the Hebrew Bible (the traditional division is into Law, Prophets, and "Writings") we find that curiously attractive yet oddly anomalous group of books which belong to the "Wisdom" literature—that somewhat sophisticated, international, sometimes apparently agnostic, often worldly-wise, sometimes hedonistic, sometimes sad and world-weary to the point occasionally of anguish, trilogy of works, Job, Proverbs, and Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). Job, essentially a dialogue on theodicy inserted into the framework of an old folk tale, raises in a way so straightforward as to amount almost to blasphemy the question of unmerited suffering and challenges squarely the older doctrine that sin brings physical punishment and that the virtuous prosper. "I have been young and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging for bread," wrote the Psalmist. Nonsense, replies the author of Job. Life isn't like that at all. And of course it isn't. Suffering does not prove antecedent sin, nor does righteous living

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guarantee happiness. While Job's friends try to persuade him that since he has been afflicted with such misfortunes he must have sinned, Job flatly refuses to accept this and keeps asking God to show him the indictment against him, to give him a proper trial instead of punishing him without even letting him know what he stands accused of. God replies, oddly enough, by castigating Job's friends and praising Job, yet at the same time humiliating Job by reciting a chain of natural wonders which God has created and which Job cannot possibly understand or control. The solution lies in wonder. God's ways are mysterious; we cannot hope to understand them. His is the power and the mystery, and we must just trust that He knows what He is doing.

The text of Job is difficult and sometimes corrupt, and the matter is made worse by the attempts of the Masorites to smooth away some of Job's more daring outbursts. Thus the exclamation, ". . . he will slay me; I shall have nothing to hope for" was changed by reading the Hebrew *lo,* meaning "not," as the word *lo,* meaning "to him" (same sound, difference in spelling of one letter), with the result that it could be translated, as the King James version has it: "Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him." (Professor Marvin H. Pope, in the Anchor Job, renders it: "He may slay me, I'll not quaver.") Job is full of such passages which Professor Pope's edition lucidly explains and clarifies. Some of the most famous sentences attributed to Job, which have rung down the ages as professions of faith, are clearly misreadings of the Hebrew, though they have developed a life of their own in religious thought and literature.

Like Professor Bright with Jeremiah, Professor Pope makes a good attempt to capture the feeling of the original poetry, using a much shorter line than more traditional translations. Here are some examples:

King James: As God liveth, who has taken away my right;
And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;
(For my life is yet whole in me,
And the spirit of God is in my nostrils;)
Surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness,
Neither shall my tongue utter deceit.

Pope: As God lives, who withholds my right,
Shaddai who has embittered my soul,
While I have life in me,
God's breath in my nostrils,
My lips will not speak falsehood,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.

* * *

King James: Let the day perish wherein I was born.
And the night which said, there is a man child conceived.

Pope: Damn the day I was born,
The night that said, 'A boy is begot.'

Pope's rhythms are much more like those of the Hebrew.

Job sounds fevered and desperate beside the mellow skepticism of Kohelet, that curiously unbiblical work which is the best and most characteristic representative of straight Wisdom literature to manage to get into the canon. It didn't get in without a struggle, and the addition of an editorial conclusion to turn the genial skepticism of the author into a reason for faith and obedience. (One is reminded of the fun David Hume had with the idea of skepticism as the basis of faith in his *Dialogues on Natural Religion.*) Professor R. B. Y. Scott, who edits the Anchor Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (in a single volume), gives us a scholarly and workmanlike translation preceded by a clear if far from concise account of the background of the Wisdom literature. Some of the information he provides duplicates the material provided in Professor Pope's Job, but this is inevitable if each volume is to be regarded as independent. He does tend to be verbose, though, not only in his introduction but also occasionally in his translation. I can see no conceivable reason why that fine verse in Proverbs traditionally (and absolutely literally) translated:

Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace

should be rendered by Professor Scott as:

Her ways are ways to delight
And all her paths lead to felicity.

"Ways to delight" might just be defended on the grounds that it gives the sense of the Hebrew more accurately (though "ways of pleasantness" is both literal and charming, if considerably longer than the Hebrew), but what can possibly be said for changing "all her paths are peace" to "all her paths lead to felicity"? Scott admits in his notes that the substitution "seems literary sacrilege" but defends it on the grounds that it makes the meaning a little clearer. I confess that I cannot see how it does that. He tells us in an earlier note that the Hebrew *shalom* really means "wholeness, harmonious well-being." I do not for a moment question Professor Scott's formidable scholarship; but I can't help wondering what would happen if, the next time I visited Israel, I greeted someone there with: "Harmonious well-being to you!"

BUT THIS is a minor point. To present Proverbs and Kohelet together in a single volume with a translation which, even if occasionally infelicitous, does genuinely clear up (particularly with respect to the latter book) some of the beautiful mystifications of the King James translators and sets both works in their time and place and in the whole context of Wisdom literature of the Near East is a fine and welcome achievement. It is interesting to put the present translation beside that

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of Robert Gordis, whose work on Kohelet is one of the noblest monuments of American Jewish biblical scholarship. Gordis emends MT less frequently than Pope, but his translation is sometimes even freer. Gordis renders "Cast thy bread upon the waters" as "Send your goods overseas," which is not what the Hebrew says, though it may well be its implication; Pope renders with absolute literalness: "Throw your bread on the surface of the water," and in doing so gives us nine English words for the five Hebrew.

THE WHOLE question of how to render the imagery of Kohelet is beset with difficulties; sometimes the idiom rendered literally is meaningless; sometimes it is suggestive but in the wrong way; sometimes again (as, surely, with the example just quoted) the literal translation can be left to achieve its own suggestion. Sometimes emendation is absolutely necessary to achieve any sense at all; at other times it may improve the sense or at least make it seem more logical. King James renders the opening of the last chapter, "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Gordis has, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (the Jewish Publication Society's version retains the dubious force of the Hebrew prefix *u-* by rendering "Remember *then* thy Creator in the days of thy youth"). But Scott decides to emend MT *bor'ēcha* ("your creator") to read *bor'cha* ("your grave")—though the common meaning of *bor* is "pit"—and renders, "In the days of your youth, remember your grave," which *is* more logical, since the passage goes on to describe the coming of old age and death. But this whole chapter is full of problems. Let anyone compare the mysteriously eloquent King James version with those of Gordis and Scott, and he will realize that the poetry of King James often produces a pleasing fuzz of meaning which is nevertheless fuzz.

As for Proverbs, they are an interesting collection of secular and religious sayings and didactic poems reflecting many of the characteristics of Near Eastern Wisdom literature. Many of the sayings keep reminding me of that bogus oriental proverb we used to joke about as schoolboys: "The rich man is kind to his dog, but the poor man rises early in the morning." After rereading the whole book of Proverbs more carefully than I have ever done before, and pondering on one of the categories of proverbs listed by Professor Scott (the pattern of *"non-identity, contrast,* or *paradox"*), I realize that this fake oriental proverb of my childhood really makes sense: the rich can afford the luxury of indulging animals, while the poor are too busy scratching a living to be able to afford that kind of indulgence. But I prefer the snappier sayings, some of which Professor Scott renders most incisively. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," the well known King James rendering, does not leap out of the page like:

Go watch an ant, you loafer!

Now that is something you can really say to people.

Sof davar hakol nishma (Kohelet, 12:13, rendered by Professor Scott as "The sum of the matter when all has been heard is this") is that the Anchor Bible is the most exciting development in biblical studies in the English-speaking world at the present time. The endeavor to give a new rendering of each book of the Bible in the light of the knowledge now possessed by the sum of biblical scholars and to set that translation in an account of the context and background drawn similarly from every relevant branch of knowledge from archaeology to textual criticism must be warmly welcomed by anybody who considers himself in any degree literate. The Bible is a quite extraordinary anthology of religious literature which, quite apart from the special part it has played in the history of Judaism and Christianity, is of the highest literary, historical, anthropological, and general human interest. It is good that expert knowledge about its nature and meaning should be released from the pages of learned journals and made available to the layman. For myself, I would have preferred an edition with the original text facing the translation. (In reviewing these volumes I have had to have a semicircle of Hebrew texts around me.) But that is probably a special taste. Of more universal value would have been the provision of maps and full indexes to each volume. One must not complain, though. This is a remarkable and quite exceptionally valuable series, and I look forward to its future volumes.

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PETER SCHMID

LETTER FROM HAVANA

WHEREVER ONE GOES in Havana, one notices how deeply the events in Santo Domingo have distressed the Castro regime. Previously, the walls of houses had displayed innocent calls to the voluntary performance of one's duty during the sugar harvest and to similar heroic deeds of labor; now there suddenly appeared horrible posters showing pictures of dead Marines. Some of the posters quoted Fidel: "Anyone who comes here to kill, must also be prepared to die himself." Others declared: "Even the Marines are only made of flesh and bones." *Revolución,* the organ of the 26th of July movement, told the terrible story of a United States Marine who had slit open a small boy with a bayonet and then eaten his liver. If one were to judge the spiritual atmosphere of Cuba by what appears there in print, one would have to estimate it as significantly more extreme than that of the Eastern European satellites and even of the Soviet Union itself: this is Peking's melody.

"For Castro's Cuba," a Western diplomat explained to me, "the intensification of the fighting in Vietnam and the intervention in Santo Domingo are almost a catastrophe. They know very well here that they cannot maintain a policy of provocation toward the United States forever. How long will the Soviet Union keep up its military and economic aid? Six hundred million dollars a year—that's no small burden, and Moscow might suddenly consider it a superfluous one if a relaxation of tension between the two world powers were to reduce the value of Cuba as a thorn in the flesh of the sworn enemy. What then? The Cubans may not have admitted it, but they always hoped for a reconciliation with Johnson, the pragmatist in the White House, or at least for a tacit agreement to live and let live. But now world history has upset these calculations. If the bogy of the international Communist conspiracy begins to unsettle the American public again, any attempt at a more realistic policy toward the Castro regime will be suicidal for an American President. That's why the mood at the top here has become one of pronounced nervousness. At the very moment when they were striving for a lessening of Communist rigidity, not only in foreign policy but also domestically, they see themselves possibly forced into the unwelcome course of increased tension."

For a Western visitor it is indeed difficult to take the Communist character of the Castro regime seriously (especially if he is able to compare it with Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and Red China). When he steps out on the terrace of his air-conditioned room at the Hotel Havana Libre (alias Hilton), no rousing martial music obtrudes from the streets below, but rather the ingratiating rhythms of the Cha Cha Cha. The militiawoman down there protecting the hotel entrance from counter-revolutionary saboteurs may be martially attired in a blue shirt, khaki pants, and marching boots, but she remains an archetypal female. She may at any moment rest her gun in her lap and start putting on make-up, or get one of her colleagues to comb her tresses. Such a sight is enough to make a Russian's or a Chinese's hair stand on end. These girls with guns, by the way, seem to sense that basically they survive only for purposes of revolutionary decoration. The Amazon brigades, which five years ago were still exercising in the parks and streets every evening and on Sunday morning—to the enchantment of all male hearts—have disappeared. Today their tasks are performed more matter-of-factly and inconspicuously by the army and the police, both of whom wear the same ugly field-gray uniforms. It is in these uniforms that "the bearded ones" fought in the Sierras, and in which, in January 1959, they entered Havana as the successors to the broken-down Batista dictatorship. After the seizure of power, Fidel's officers wore only inconspicuous insignias; if one did not know him, even Fidel himself would hardly look different from an ordinary soldier. There are, to be sure, fewer beards in evidence than on my first trip to Cuba five years ago. Raúl Castro, whose chin never sprouted properly, has shaved; other old fighters have been dislodged by beardless Communist party members. One is told that only half of the former still enjoy public office, the rest having in one way or another descended into anonymity (or even, like Hubert Mateos, into a prison cell).

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And along with the new faces, a less romantic and more sober atmosphere has made its appearance. It is no longer possible to travel freely all over the island and stop at some farm, there to be received with open arms by a friendly eccentric; one can no longer engage such young men in discussions that last all day and all night, and that are free of any ideological muzzle (what hunger for the exciting knowledge of the outside world!); nor will they proudly show you their work. All this, which five years ago made the experience of Cuba such a happy one, has disappeared today. Since Santo Domingo, the foreign journalist is not allowed the freedom of movement he used to have; he is given, instead, generous offers of travel under escort, and the functionaries to whom he speaks receive directives from above which it would be wholly useless, if not dangerous, to discuss. Sometimes I could not resist the impression that the taciturnity of these gentlemen could be directly traced to a certain meagerness of expert knowledge. When I asked the leader of the state farm at Granma, a mammoth operation with over 4,000 workers, about his agronomic training, he laughed and told me he had previously been a day-laborer; everyone did what he could at whatever post he was assigned, he concluded almost apologetically. I was happy to grant him good will as well as the intelligence to learn through experience, but his was not the only case during my stay that induced in me the oppressive feeling that the Communist party's membership list has been playing a greater role in the process of selecting officials than human and technical qualifications (though that, too, may now be changing).

IT IS NOT hard to substantiate this personal impression with figures. Since Castro's seizure of power, a half-million of Cuba's seven million inhabitants have voluntarily turned their backs on their homeland, and among these emigrants were the middle-class elite which should have provided the sorely needed guidance for the new socialist economy. Castro simply let them go, optimistically believing that it would be easy to replace every obstinate old counter-revolutionary with a loyal young enthusiast. But in a situation in which the socialist inflation of the bureaucracy multiplied the need for technical experts, such generosity was bound to have fatal consequences. The development of Cuba's bureaucracy strikes one as a flesh-and-blood confirmation of Parkinson's theory, according to which there is a cancerous increase of departments which must artificially create the tasks that justify their continued existence. After Fidel Castro declared out of the blue, in April 1961, that he had always been a Marxist-Leninist, a socialist apparatus of control was systematically installed. Czech and Hungarian experts worked out an organizational chart for every ministry and every industry, a kind of family tree with an immense number of interconnected squares, each awaiting a name to fill it. No sooner was it filled than each square developed an organizational chart of its own, officially requisitioned a comfortable house, in most cases taken over from a departed counter-revolutionary, obtained a car from the same source, employed a number of secretaries, and occupied itself with the production reports and order forms of the newly nationalized industries. The most minute details of Eastern European procedure, no matter how absurd, were slavishly imitated. There was only one difference: Latin-American offices had never been models of efficiency and they did not become such under the new Communist system.

Sometimes the Cubans went even further than was warranted by their model, as in the nationalization of the large landed estates. The other Communist states first divided these among the landless peasants, and then used mild coercion and the art of persuasion to gather the peasants into collectives; in Cuba, this procedure was only cursorily attempted and quickly abandoned. By way of explanation, I was told that before the Revolution the Cuban *guajiro* led the miserable life of a mere farm-hand; employed for no more than four months out of the year as a cutter during the sugar harvest, he and his family endured the rest of the time on the edge of starvation, idly waiting around for occasional work. This agricultural proletariat was never comparable to the East European tenant farmers, who knew full well how to value and desire the joys and duties of ownership—albeit from a negative perspective. A *guajiro,* however, was not a peasant; he was an irresponsible underling. Why should one begin by awakening in him the suspect profit motive of free enterprise by presenting him with a small private plot of land? Better to leave his status as it was, give him work the whole year round, and build a decent roof over his head. Instead, then, of the *kolkhoz* farmer, with his small stable and garden, living on communally worked land whose yield is distributed among the members, there arose in Cuba the state employee with a fixed wage of $3.50 a day, and a consciousness which puts the welfare of the people in place of self-interest.

Theoretically, that is. "I don't understand these people," complained Comrade Froilan, the party propagandist who accompanied me on my trip through the province of Oriente. "At the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion, these peasants took up their guns and enthusiastically hurried to their posts, ready to lay down their lives for the Revolution. A few months later, I saw them dozing in the fields, shirking work. Why, I asked myself, are they ready to *die* for the Revolution, but not to *work* for it?" The result was that the state farms, instead of replenishing the public treasury, emptied it; in many places wages came to twice the sum of receipts. Today, Froilan assured me,

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untiring stakhanovite exhortation and more rigorous controls are producing results. The early error of Castroism in coddling the peasant—instead of exploiting him in the interest of industrialization, as did Stalin and Mao—has been abandoned as too costly. Quixotically ignoring the factor of human egoism, the Communist system necessarily develops the same or similar forms of incentive everywhere: quotas that entail punishment for indolence and panegyrics for surpassing them.

Under the Batista tyranny, the industrial workers had, through their powerful unions, achieved a high standard of living and a 36-hour week. Today they have to work 44 hours a week: to this is added the so-called "voluntary" work of three to four hours a week (guard duty in the militia). In the worst Stalinist style, the newspapers no longer report on anything except "heroes of labor" and production records. No love triangle finds its way into the papers anymore, not even a traffic accident (though the mishaps due to the failing brakes and sputtering motors of those cars that are still operational would provide plenty of copy).

I became aware of how necessary (and how futile) all the propaganda is, when I visited a brand-new factory for the manufacture of refrigerators in Santa Clara. For the most part, industrialization has, reasonably enough, been limited to simpler consumer goods—why shouldn't Cuba be able to produce its own nails and pencils?—but the new refrigerator factory has been criticized by many as a white elephant, an undertaking of dubious economic value. Some of the machinery comes from Italy, and some from Czechoslovakia, which also furnished the technical plans and experts. Production per month amounts to 400 refrigerators, which, notwithstanding their smaller capacity and more primitive technical equipment, cost about twice as much as imports from the West. When I got to the factory, half the employees were gathered around the Italian pressing machine which stamps the box out of plastic material imported from Russia. I don't know what was wrong, but just then another broken box emerged from the press, onto a scrap heap that rose higher than the pile of useable products. "It doesn't matter," the Director said consolingly, when he noticed my critical look, "this can all be ground up and used again." At a subsequent plant meeting, the head of the union chose harsher words, giving a unique curtain-speech about the lack of proper morale at work. When preaching no longer suffices, punishment is relied upon. The first time a worker is late he loses a whole day's pay; three times and he loses three days' pay. Thus a worker who has been late three times will be penalized for his lapses to the tune of five days' pay.

Now it would, of course, be unjust to lay all the economic problems of industrialization in Cuba at the door of the Communist system. For instance, Mexico, too, refuses to be put off by higher costs when it convinces or compels foreign-owned or domestic industrial concerns to develop production within the country instead of relying on cheaper imports. Such "childhood diseases" beset all underdeveloped nations. It is only that by its nature centralized socialist planning is more prone to uneconomic fantasies than is private capital. A number of the new Cuban factories stand empty today because water, electricity, raw materials, or manpower are missing, and the whole ambitious industrialization program has shrunk to a fraction of its former magnitude. But the consumer, now as before, must pay inflated prices for the sorry goods he gets.

The economists know the reason for these horrendous prices. Just as there was an initial coddling of peasants and workers, which then changed into its opposite, so in regard to consumer goods did the Castro regime err by at first inaugurating a phase marked by over-indulgence of the population. State-owned "People's stores" forced down prices in the private sector of the economy and this, together with the increased purchasing power of the masses (who were given higher wages), created an inflationary pressure. The correction for this state of affairs has again been taken from Stalin's book: high prices, even for the shabby goods which are offered. I was only sorry that I had not brought along a supply of razor blades to give away as presents. The Cuban brand is called *Venceremos,* which means "we shall triumph," but every morning the battle is a bloody martyrdom.

Goods which are not produced domestically are imported from the Eastern bloc, with Russia's share having declined as China's has risen. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union still retains the lion's share of Cuba's foreign-trade volume of approximately $1700 million per annum, accounting for almost $700 million of that sum (with only $275 million of imports from Cuba, as opposed to more than $410 million of exports). China is in second place with about $190 million; after a big gap she is followed by Japan, Czechoslovakia, and England. The United States, which as late as 1959 dominated the market almost monopolistically with some $950 million, today no longer even exports the medicines and foodstuffs which at first slipped through the blockade: the U.S. volume of trade with Cuba is now a naked zero. All things considered, it is astonishing that such a radical change has not created greater pandemonium in Cuba's daily life. I visited a workshop where Russian diesel motors were successfully being built into the bodies of old General Motors buses. One hears complaints about Soviet military vehicles and farm machinery: it is said that because of their northern origin they do not bear up well in a tropical climate, their engines forever coming to a boil. Russian private cars—Volgas and

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Moscovites—are seldom seen: the old American taxis hold on to their lives tenaciously, and their owners, one of the last remaining groups that has preserved its economic independence, are the most inveterate counter-revolutionaries in the whole country.

It is not, however, the hunt for substitute parts, nor the desperate improvisations required for making do with what one has, nor the housewife's interminable waiting in line in order to pick up some scarce product (like nylon underwear) which has miraculously appeared on the shelves—it is not these things which trouble the Cubans most. It is plainly and simply hunger. When, during the second part of my trip, I was able to get away from the party's surveillance and travel alone by bus from Oriente back to Havana, this complaint, like an endless refrain, sounded through countless conversations with simple people. One has only to say that one is Swiss (otherwise one is presumed to be Russian or East German and is treated with the necessary caution) to unleash a flood of words. "I earn 160 pesos a month [$60 at the official rate of exchange]," the driver of my bus told me. (We had plenty of time for conversation: the packing of the gear-box had come loose, and in all of Camaguey, though it is an important capital of a province, no grease for the transmission could be found). "Sixty of that goes for food while I'm on the road, 25 for rent, 5 for gas and light. That leaves 70 pesos for the family—I have a wife and a daughter. Under rationing, we get 3 kilos [about 7 lbs.] of rice per person per month; that's enough for one meal a day. And 50 grams [about 8 ounces] of second-rate meat, that's enough for one meal a *week*. There's no way out except the black market: there a kilo of rice costs one peso. I won't even talk about clothing: shirts, shoes, suits. I just don't earn anywhere near enough."

The man sitting next to me, a mechanic, engaged in exactly the same worried calculation. "I earn 120 pesos," he complained, "and I have to feed a family of five. Czech engineers built a new power station in my city and offered me a job at higher wages. But you need permission to change jobs, and my application was rejected." Five years ago Castro's opponents still came mainly from the middle class, but today dissatisfaction has spread to the simple people, who used to celebrate Castro as their liberator.

CUBA's situation would undoubtedly be less lamentable had not the regime made so many mistakes in its past planning. The worst thing about Communist systems is perhaps not so much the terror they entail as their world-upheaving *hybris*. Like the student in Goethe's *Faust*, Communists are given to the belief that "The world did not exist ere I created it." The careless and idealistic youthfulness of the "bearded ones," in human terms so sympathetic, was bound to have unfortunate consequences once it unleashed its whirlwind in the sensitive domain of the economy. The fact that Cuba lived off its sugar exports was not, in the eyes of the revolutionaries, a gift from heaven but rather an insidious trick played by American imperialists for the purpose of enslavement. Away, then, with the single-crop economy! Up with agricultural diversification and industrialization! In 1961, 150,000 acres of sugar fields were planted with tomatoes, rice and sisal; a tenth of all farm workers were transplanted to the cities, there to labor in newly erected factories.

Yet sugar, which nowhere else in the world has such ideal conditions for growth as in Cuba, simply represents the destiny of this island—slogans or no slogans. This year's harvest therefore received top priority in all propaganda campaigns. Since the *guajiros*, who under capitalism had provided cheap and competent manpower for cutting sugar, had disappeared into the cities and the army, Fidel Castro and his whole government took to the land for a week, in order to set an example for hundreds of thousands of volunteers. Offices and factories sent whole brigades of workers into the sugar fields. (These "voluntary" amateur cutters were not always equal to their task. For example, I met one of the country's leading artists, who had inadvertently stabbed himself in the hand with his bush-knife.)

All the propaganda and hubbub did, however, work—six million tons were harvested (a goal which had previously been taken for granted) and there are plans for raising the amount to ten million by 1970, with the help of mechanized cutting. Soviet Russia alone has agreed to purchase 24 million tons, between January of last year and 1970, at six cents a pound. But mitigating the generosity of this price (as compared to this year's world market price of a little more than two cents) is the fact that only a fifth of the deliveries will be paid for in cash, the rest in goods for which exorbitant sums will be charged.

I was rather surprised to discover that in spite of all their aid, the Russians are not well liked. In Santiago, the capital of Oriente, the men habitually gather, in accordance with an old Spanish custom, for discussions (in which, within limits, even political criticism is possible). As I was photographing a group of these gentlemen, I encountered unconcealed antipathy: they turned their backs or ostentatiously walked away. "Are you a Russian?" an old Negro finally asked me. When I identified myself as Swiss, his face lit up visibly. "Oh, then you're a decent man!" he said. "Why?" I asked, "aren't the Russians decent men?" The answer consisted of the Homeric laughter of the bystanders.

Even friends of the regime find it difficult to surmount the difference in mentality between themselves and their allies from the East. "The Russians are uncivilized," a young writer ex-

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plained to me. "They don't dress as well as we do, even with all our shortages. And they never take a bath. We Cubans take two showers a day; the climate demands it. The Russians stink; we can't stand that."

But the Cubans need not worry so much about their noses any more. The time of the missile crisis, during which whole units of Russian soldiers were on the island, is long past, and one hardly notices the Russian advisers and technicians one meets in factories and ministries. They don't mix much with Cubans, nor even with their East European colleagues. When they have enough vodka in them, I was told by someone who knows, they are likely to inveigh vehemently against Cuban frivolity and the Cuban habit of taking the sacrifices of other socialist countries for granted. Moscow's next project in Cuba, they say, will be an institution for Russian experts with nervous breakdowns. As for the Czechs, they don't even need vodka to set off their grumbling. What does a professor of veterinary medicine care about the beautiful climate when he has to do the simplest laboratory work himself because there are no trained assistants?

There is, to be sure, an army of students being trained, but they are at present still in secondary school, and it will take several years before they can step into the breach. To drive at noon through the quarter of Marianao is to gain one of the rarest and most beautiful impressions of Havana. Here is where the upper classes used to have their villas, which today are inhabited by the so-called *becadas,* scholarship students. Whole columns of girls in trim school uniforms can be seen around noon, entering or leaving the various high schools in the converted villas; the young men have prudently been housed in another part of the city. All together there are 80,000 young people from all over the country, and their studies don't cost them a penny. Some of them are children of simple peasants; others come from good families in the capital and visit their parents every week. Nevertheless, they choose to live in the community of the other *becadas* because—at least this is what they say—they prefer training for collective responsibility to the comforts of life at home. They also claim that their studies are more fruitful when they live together with other students. Nevertheless, a number of critics can be encountered who find fault with it all, claiming that the lax criteria of selection, and the minimal demands placed on these scholarship students, have made for low quality; they say there is too much window dressing and not enough educational discipline.

In the field of education, too, the regime has changed its plans. After taking power, Castro wanted to show his gratitude to the poor peasants in the Sierra Maestra region, where for years he had waged a guerrilla war against Batista's troops. Therefore he built a school center in the foothills of the area; it is named after Camillo Cienfuegos, a comrade-in-arms who lost his life in a mysterious airplane accident in 1959. There is a row of modern bungalows with well-tended gardens: it is an architectural ornament that would do honor to the richest countries of Europe, or to the United States. But to the poor sons of peasants from the mountains, it is a utopian ambience, appropriate neither to their past nor their future.

Two hours further on, one finds the more realistic creation of most recent times: Minas del Frio, which represents the first phase in the development of a projected centralized teacher-training program. One needs a truck to get there; even jeeps have difficulty with the inconceivably steep road to the top of a ridge that is more than six-thousand feet above sea level. When one arrives one rubs one's eyes in disbelief. Is this supposed to be an educational institution? It looks like an army camp. On one slope there is a row of simple barracks. From the other side can be heard the sound of male and female teachers lecturing. The classrooms have no walls, consisting of thatched roofs on wooden stakes; underneath, the young people crouch on low stools. At mealtime they stream to the kitchen barrack and stand in line with their tin plates, then gulp down their food while sitting on the bare ground.

This new style of life of the intellectuals is far removed from the international luxury of Centro Camillo Cienfuegos. "Our teachers," the director of the school explained to me, "for the most part will have to work in villages with very simple surroundings and play a leading role there. That's why it's best to get them used to their future style of life from the start." In addition to their studies, they engage in manual labor in the surrounding forests or a nearby state farm. The view that working with one's hands is beneath an educated man, which even today stamps the intellectuals of other Latin American countries as snobbish parasites—this view is being thoroughly eliminated among the young generation of Cuban teachers. I don't think the reason for this is to be found in Marxism-Leninism, but rather in the feeling for living on the land among the old guerrilla fighters. (Polytechnical education, which in other Communist countries forces even urban students to the workbench, has not been introduced in Cuba yet.)

THIS RUSTIC wildness is one of the most attractive features of Castro's regime. In Cuba, the "new class," which Djilas accused of betraying the Revolution, is—if it exists at all—blessed with only very modest privileges. Here there are no palaces of the kind which Tito is having built for himself all over Yugoslavia, none of the expensive limousines which the Chinese Communists order for themselves. Fidel prefers to live in a simple rented house with his old friend, Celia Sanchez. His comrades-in-arms, ministers, and

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higher bureaucrats, to be sure, have established themselves in the abandoned villas of the departed upper class. I don't know whether the rumors one hears among the people are true—that they get special supplements to their rations—but I do know that two or three extra pieces of meat per week do not make a "new class." Once in a while one can even see a minister's wife patiently waiting in some line, and it is said that Señora Che Guevara's hands are worn with work because she has to manage her household on a *Comandante's* salary (less than $200 a month).

Their chief fault—youthful carelessness and a tendency to play for high stakes—is at the same time the charm of these revolutionaries: they are still too young to make the transition to a bourgeois delight in power. They want no more than to enjoy the purely spiritual dynamics of power, and their mentality is thus closer to that of a bullfighter than of an *apparatchik*. Fidel may declare himself to be a Marxist-Leninist and imitate the stuff and trappings of the Communist "brother countries," but the Latin American style of life is too far removed from the Eastern European or the Chinese to make such imitation anything more than the mood of a fleeting moment. Among the elements that were forged into a single party in 1961—the Socialist People's Party (Communist), the student federation, and the 26th of July movement—the Communists were able to exploit the exuberance of the honeymoon period in order to appropriate a position of leadership for themselves, but since then their power has been subject to a steady erosion. In March of 1962 Annibale Escalante was booted out of the party leadership (he died a few months ago) because the mercurial Cubans resisted his doctrinaire, Moscow-directed dogmatism. Earlier this year, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez had to turn over the leadership of the Institute of Agrarian Reform to Fidel himself, and foreigners in Havana are debating whether or not the additional elimination of at least thirty Communist or pro-Communist functionaries signifies a change of direction for the regime.

And what is one to make of the mysterious disappearing act of the erstwhile economic dictator, Che Guevara? Though Guevara was never a member of the Communist party and always emphasized the necessity of Latin America's going its own way, he has nevertheless been the leading socialist dreamer of the regime. He has categorically rejected all entreaties for a period of consolidation such as even Lenin granted the Russians with his New Economic Policy. He has said that the Revolution must go on, lest it go under. Did this relentless radicalism lead to differences of opinion with the more flexible Castro? Or is Guevara simply waiting for a more powerful assignment than he can have in the Ministry of Industry, which is now being put on the shelf? What goes on behind the mysterious silence that surrounds the man who was once called the head of the Revolution, along with Fidel Castro as the heart and Raoul Castro as the fist?

All foreign observers in Havana agree that the hectic rhythm with which the Revolution has been pursued must eventually lead to an exhaustion all the greater for having been pursued in a tropical country, and that a recuperative pause cannot be postponed much longer. Such a pause has become even more imperative because the dissatisfaction now spreading among the people is more economic than ideological in character. In other words, the potential counter-revolution has its roots more in the stomach than in the mind or the heart. No ideology—not even the Catholic religion—has ever been able to strike deep roots on this island. Although the papal nuncio himself, Monsignor Zacchi, has denied that there is any religious persecution in Cuba—the Baptist missionaries recently arrested for espionage and black-marketeering were anything but innocent—500 out of 700 pre-revolutionary priests have fled in panic, and now veil their cowardice with atrocity stories. The number of practicing Catholics never came to more than 2½ per cent of the total population and was limited to the hispanic middle class of the cities. The rural population lived, and continues to live, in a kind of unideological pragmatic paganism that is unmistakably African in character.

The African characteristics of Cuba, indeed, are becoming, if anything, more marked today. Even though there was, in the past, never any formal discrimination against Negroes (12 per cent of the population) or mulattoes (15 per cent), the black population nevertheless had few prospects of rising into the middle class, being without financial means and without great educational opportunities. The social revolution which Castro made his chief task has today led to a kind of overcompensation for this silent discrimination. Thus, Negroes receive special privileges, especially in the army (whose commander-in-chief, Almeida, is a mulatto), and in the schools of higher learning, where the proportion of dark faces among the students visibly constitutes more than 25 per cent. "In the case of applications for a government position," a white Cuban lady complained to me, "preference is often given to a less qualified Negro, out of this feeling of having to overcompensate for a former injustice. This has awakened among many white Cubans a feeling of *ressentiment* that never used to exist: a racial consciousness that entails the danger—in spite of the seemingly unstrained relations at work and in school—of one day developing into racial hatred." But things have not gone that far yet, and perhaps the lady's fears are unwarranted.

IDLE CALCULATIONS expressed in the percentage figures of a public-opinion poll, about the supporters and opponents of the regime, do little

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justice to the complex realities. If all those who grumble are included in the opposition, it could be said to amount to 80 per cent of the population. But we must not forget that grumbling about the regime is a deeply rooted Spanish disposition. For when one sounds out the complainers and carpers as to whether in a given case they would take a hand in unseating Castro, it turns out that irreconcilable opponents do not come to more than 30 per cent. When I used to ask whether they would support a landing by United States Marines, the typical answer was that given by a hard-boiled *Gusano* (a "worm," as Fidel called his opponents—the name has stuck): "Everyone down to the last Cuban would give his last drop of blood to fight at Fidel's side against an invasion."

Even in my talks with counter-revolutionaries I waited in vain for a profession of the kind of faith that elsewhere gives meaning to the opposition and drives it on (as in Budapest in 1956) to make mystical sacrifices; I waited in vain to hear something like, "I simply can't bear it any longer, I just can't stand it." In front of the Mexican embassy, where he had picked up his emigration visa, I was told by a *Gusano* that he owned two television sets which no longer worked; his Chevrolet, too, was about to break down, and it was therefore time to leave the country. *Ubi bene, ibi patria*: even if the reality of emigration does not correspond to these expectations, the frivolity with which the *Gusanos* shake the dust of their homeland from their shoes is nevertheless shocking. If, therefore, the regime should succeed in correcting the stupidities of the past with a new economic policy; if rice, meat, and consumer goods should become available in sufficient quantities, the army of the dissatisfied could be expected to dwindle quickly.

In the 50's the Western traveler through Eastern Europe had the feeling of belonging to a silent community of conspirators—along with all decent men—against the ruling scum who could only be maintained by terrorism and foreign bayonets. In Cuba, by contrast, the weapons are to a great extent in the hands of the people themselves; every one of the 300,000 members of the militia has his own gun and ammunition. And throughout the whole country, in every factory and on every city block, the "Committees of Revolutionary Defense" watch over counter-revolutionaries and suspected foreigners. I was personally able to discover how excellently the system functions when I photographed a line of at least 300 women waiting in front of a department store. Two of the women immediately stepped out of line, and five minutes later a policeman arrived and asked me to follow him. He pulled me into a side street, turned around, and—apologized. "I passed by you a while ago and saw you taking pictures," he explained to me. "As you know, such pictures are sometimes used as anti-Cuban propaganda in other countries, but since I thought that you were engaged in a legitimate activity, I didn't see any occasion for intervening. But then various passers-by drew my attention to you, and I would have exposed myself to charges of falling short of the proper vigilance if I had ignored their denunciation of you. So, please excuse me and go your way."

Where else in the socialist world—except perhaps in China—do the police protect the stranger from the excessive enthusiasm of the citizen-militia? When I decided to take a closer look at these CRD committees, incidentally, their members turned out to be significantly more amicable. In the Old City part of Havana, I met a toothless old girl on whose heavy bosom was pinned a medal bearing the likeness of Dimitrov. She told me she was a blockwarden and invited me for coffee in her dark backyard. There she introduced me to a few of the 75 members of her particular Defense Committee. I must confess that they did not at all look as I had expected them to look: they were modest little philistines and gray-haired old ladies. Far from being ideological fanatics, they were of that species of human being that is less concerned with the improvement of the world than with the anxious preservation of existing morality. Their chief knew absolutely nothing about Marxism-Leninism and was rather astonished and disappointed when I told her about Dimitrov: she had thought it was Lenin on her medal. We parted as good friends. (Recently, by the way, the CRD committees have been doing less snooping; the government is trying to utilize their desire to serve for organizational tasks such as the distribution of ration cards, assisting in innoculation campaigns, working for blood banks, and similar public projects.)

I DO NOT want to conclude without telling about Nisia, whom I met five years ago, at which time she was a student at the University of Havana. Nisia is the daughter of a physician and she lives in a pretty house in Vedado; she is a typical member of the upper middle class. Nevertheless, a huge picture of Castro hangs in her living room. Five years ago, though she was thoroughly involved in gymnastics and learning to use a gun, we still found time enough to see each other frequently. On this visit, I drove to her house on the first evening after my arrival only to find that she wasn't there; it was after 10 when I finally reached her by telephone. Could we meet again? Certainly, but she would leave for work tomorrow morning at 7, and the evening was taken up with meetings and other duties. The same went for the day after tomorrow. In short, during my whole month in Havana, the busy girl only had time to accept one invitation to dinner. When I criticized her for this complete renunciation of her private life, she smiled. The tasks she had set herself were worth the sacrifice of a private life. In the past years, this twenty-three-year-old slip of a girl had organized the entire

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public health service in Oriente. Now she worked in a similar key position in the Ministry of Education. "It's like this," she confessed to me, "God knows I'm not a Communist, and I didn't like a lot of what I saw these past few years. But when I remember the moral and social morass of our country under Batista, and when I contrast it with the hope that seems justified today, then, all in all, I feel pretty positive; that's why I find it worthwhile to devote all my energies to the service of the Revolution. More than my energy: during my stay in Oriente, I fell in love with a man, a counter-revolutionary, who left the country and begged me to go with him. It was a terrible choice, but I remained here, and I don't think I'll regret it."

Similar words were used by the young writer I've mentioned, the one who could not stand the smell of the Russians. He earns his living by working in a nationalized refinery. "Under the Americans, I made three times as much money," he said. "Obviously, there are a lot of things I can no longer afford. But when you get right down to it, how much does your standard of living matter, though there's a lot of talk about it? To me it's much more important to have found a purpose and a goal: that I didn't have before." As a final witness, I want to quote that hungry mechanic, bound to an unsatisfactory job. He admitted to me that during the sugar harvest he volunteered his services; really volunteered them without being subjected to pressure or secret fears. "It's a job that has to be done in the interest of the country, and I wanted to do my part."

That is what is astonishing about this strange Cuban people: unideological, seemingly superficial, many of them are nevertheless capable of an idealism that makes material realities seem as nothing. The history of the whole Revolution, from the attack on the caserne at Moncada to the landing of the lost band of revolutionaries at Granma, is full of episodes that a responsible historian would obviously have to reject as insane and impossible. But they made history anyway, and the Don Quixote who undertook the "impossible" must today be recognized as a leading catalyst in the Western hemisphere. His further goals are as "impossible" as they ever were: a revolution throughout Latin America. In Havana, the guerrillas and bandits (who can draw the line?) of Venezuela are celebrated as the avant garde of liberation, and no one much cares about being treated as the leper of the Western hemisphere and being condemned to live in splendid isolation. Can anything be done with these dangerous visionaries? Can one deal with them? Can one trust their words? When the visitor leaves Cuba, he does not really know whether he should admire or hate, weep or laugh. It is such contradictions which make Castro's Revolution the most fascinating phenomenon of the history of our day.

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MEYER LIBEN

CCNY—A Memoir

1. The Alcoves

It appears now, in the judgment of history, which is not irreversible, that there was something special about CCNY in the 1930's. So one need not invoke Nostalgia (neither the greatest of virtues, nor the lowest of pleasures) to justify a recollection, even an analysis, of those times. I choose the early 1930's because that period coincides with my attendance there.

Among the latter-day Decade-Analysts of the 20th century, the Twenties have fallen behind the Thirties. This is now the hottest of the decades—here lies treasure trove for fiction writers, sociologists, journalists, fantasists, and other searchers amongst ruins. True, the decade of the Twenties has won itself an adjective (Roaring), which is more than we can say for the Thirties (*The Trying Thirties? The Dismal Decade?*), but maybe it is in the nature of that decade to repel adjectives, the way it is inconceivable for a certain kind of person to have a nickname. To point up the possible reversibility of history's judgment, the London *Times Literary Supplement* referred in 1955 to "the happy, self-confident 1930's. . . ." Now some college students, in between identity crises, are apparently upset that they did not live through those years of social struggle, social hope. Or is that, too, an indication of identity crisis, to wish to be contemporary with one's parents? There is a retrospective glamour in grayness, the Great Depression has its worshippers.

And then *City College* in the 30's. What happened at Berkeley once in a lifetime might happen, or looked as though it might happen, at City every Thursday between 12 and 2 in the afternoon. That was when student clubs met, when outside speakers came onto campus, when the distinction between a meeting and a demonstration was kind of tenuous, sometimes broke down. The sound of the police siren was sometimes heard on St. Nicholas Terrace.

But the occasional riots were only part of the story of student radicalism, itself only part of the story of the College (in reply to a question as to what college you attended, the answer would be CCNY or City College; basketball fans referred to the school as *City*; among ourselves, we usually referred to the College, though the formal title was the College of the City of New York, and the technico/legal, or super-formal, title was the City College of the College of the City of New York). Most of the students were not involved in the radical movement. That was a point made by administrative officials to appease the clamor of the enemies of free higher education. It was a correct point, but not always relevant.

Most of us finished our classes and went home, but others stayed on, some in the libraries, some —the frivolous types—pursuing the comely nursemaids on the Terrace, and a mixed lot winding up in the Alcoves. These alcoves (a word calculated to bring bemusement, a joyful glint of remembrance to most CCNY men of those days) were kinds of booths, in the basement, adjoining the cafeteria. There were alcoves for each class, and there were benches in the alcoves. These alcoves were the heart of the college—like the furnace of the ship in Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*. Even those who finished their classes and went home spent time down there, between classes, or maybe lingeringly before going home. To understand CCNY in the 30's it is necessary to understand the Alcoves, the very word is like a knell, I mean like a bell, summoning up images, no, memories of conversations (the images are of the conversationalists) desperate and idle, doctrinaire and pragmatic, with subjects (predominantly, certainly most heatedly, political) of the wide-ranging spectrum typical of free-speech forums. Have you ever group-hopped in the Union Square park, or on Columbus Circle before the Arterial-Sclerotic people took over?

The benches in the alcoves were not much used. We were vertical (not peripatetic), the soft leather was wasted—some student with enormous powers of concentration might try to read, occasionally someone stretched out, even snoozed, oblivious to the clamor above. But there were also quiet moments in the alcoves, usually late in the afternoon, when you didn't have to concentrate to read, and could carry on conversations of a serene, if not courtly, manner. Our best sports,

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basketball and talk, were indoor. In the alcoves it was dark, Dostoevskian dark, corresponding, no doubt, to the soul's needs at that time.

The discussions down there ("Let's discuss the situation") often turned into arguments (from talk to conversation to discussion to argument are easy gradations) and these of a sometimes violent nature. When that happened, a crowd gathered around the contestants, the way kids do, waiting for a fight to explode. But there were no fist-fights, even when the provocations seemed unbearable. Personalities were supposed to be out—we were arguing positions. The political discussions ranged from the sectarian to the loftiest, most utopian matters, from issues of the day to questions of the "withering away of the state," of the famous leap from "necessity to freedom" (*there* is a "leap forward"), of the quality of life under socialism (what will be the nature of conflict once the class structures disappear?). The political spectrum at the College, as compared to that of the population at large, was somewhat eccentric. There was no doubt a Republican somewhere among the students. There were, of course, Democrats, but their position was not considered a political one—to be a Democrat meant that you wished to become a lawyer, teacher, civil servant, and were protecting your future. The radicals ranged from right-wing Socialists (followers of Morris Hillquit, Algernon Lee) to splinters from the Trotskyist left wing. In between was a bewildering variety—Austro-Marxists, orthodox Communists, Socialist centrists and Socialist left-wingers, Kautskyites, followers of the Independent Labor Party in England, the Lovestoneites, Brandlerites, and many another group, faction, or splinter, to say nothing of the student organizations. Sometimes a distinct position turned out to be held exclusively by a family, even by an individual. Most of these groupings were Marxist-oriented. We also had in our midst philosophical anarchists, supporters of the IWW, and all kinds of sympathizers, fellow-travelers, and indeterminists.

I don't mean to imply that all the energy was dissipated in talk ("What are you doing this afternoon?" "Nothing." "How about picketing J. P. Morgan?"). It was the time of "Deeds, Not Words," of "Art Is A Weapon." In the midst of our dying world shimmered ivory towers, wherein dwelled Symbolists, other strange creatures who lived lives apart—far from relief lines, from Hoovervilles, from Harlan County, from Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro boys and the memory of Sacco-Vanzetti, far from the doomed farmer, from the struggle for Manchuria. There were harsh words spoken about James Branch Cabell. A Socialist speaker, urging on his audience, wound up with the exhortation: "*Educate! Agitate! Propagate!*" (the word "propagandize" not fitting into the rhythm of the slogan). There were (mostly on the outside) picket lines, demonstrations, meetings, forms of action. The liberals were treated with some condescension; we were considered indecisive, but were always needed when it came to signing petitions, fighting the administration on matters of civil liberties. We tried not to be among those who, in the words of Yeats,

. . . must to keep their certainty accuse
All that are different of a base intent.

The arguments raged. What was the relation between economics and freedom? Was justice possible without economic equality, class transformations? Among the liberals were skeptics, ironists, fierce logicians. Many wore what Sidney Hook (class of '23) called "the mark of Cohen." That would be Morris Raphael Cohen. You isolated a monist position and hammered away. You caught your opponent in a fallacy, preferably a logical one, but a historical one would do. You smiled. Let him get out of *that* one. Then the bell rang, new period, changing of the guard in the Alcoves.

2. Lost Causes

It is possible to argue that the lost causes are the most meaningful ones—

Only the buried can flower
Only the losers have won
Homage to Samuel Greenberg
And to Emily Dickinson

—but that can be a mood rather than an objectivity, and it's certainly not part of The American Way. The notion even smacks of self-pity, of masochism (the psychological correlate of the Lost Cause?), for we are future-bound (some of us, anyway), think of great social harmonies coming, think with Emerson "that this country, the last found, is the great charity of God to the human race." But our alcoves were alive with lost causes—all that activism, fanatical intelligence, emotional investment, never paid off in the great world. Power was not seized, society was not being transformed, (except for the worse), the dream of justice (practical or millennial) was not being realized. The unemployment figures mounted, the Scottsboro boys stayed in jail, the New Deal hadn't come to power, international fascism was on the march, the heartland of America was not deeply impressed by the cries of the students; the country was not moving in the direction of peace, harmony, and justice, and resisted the analysis of Marx the way other lands in other times had resisted the thunderous anguish of Isaiah. Something stubborn, intractable, stood in the way, and that led to the problem of Human Nature. *There* was the great enemy to human progress. But Human Nature was created by its social surroundings. Change society and human nature would be changed. But societies *had* changed, and human nature remained the same—aggressive, murderous,

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selfish (present company excluded). So ran another of the interminable arguments. It was before the flowering of Freudo/Marxism.

There is nothing so pure as a lost cause which has no power connection. In that way the Communists, heady with ideology, though making little headway, were not lost causers, because of the Soviet power base. The Socialists were quite genuine lost causers, for their dream of a cooperative commonwealth had rough going in a land so recently seized from its native inhabitants and among a people so property-oriented, so money-oriented, so power-oriented (even the cooperative elements—unions, fraternal organizations, manufacturers' associations, teams, and groups of friends, cooperate in a competitive way). But the Art of the Possible had its adherents: voices were raised asking the students to pay some mind to the less glamorous intramural matters—to the college curriculum, for example! The radicals either disregarded such matters, or pinned on the label of Escapism, for preoccupation with curriculum, better teaching, a clean lunchroom, meant that you did not comprehend that the college was caught up in the world struggle, that you could not isolate one kind of problem from the other, and if you persisted, why then you were "confused," a common, if mild epithet. Undue preoccupation with curriculum, etc., was escapist, but taking sides, "involvement," in the Manchurian War was for real. There was one intramural issue that generated steam, and that was Military Science, which, after a period of struggle (Felix Cohen—untimely dead—the main fighter there) had lost its compulsory character in 1926. The first World War didn't enjoy much of a reputation, Hitler was not yet in power, the tides of pacifism ran high, and Mili Sci on the campus remained the focus for agitation, for reasons ranging from honest pacifism to the exploitation of this genuine feeling.

But this issue, and the one of Free Speech, led right into world issues. And there the possibilities of fruition were not great. The Socialist struggle for a cooperative commonwealth, the Communist demand for a Soviet America (the Trotskyists had to transform both the Soviets *and* America), the hope and struggle of the liberals for a transformation of capitalism, spreading the benefits, strengthening civil liberties and minority rights—well, the situation was not hopeful, was not "ripe," in the Marxist way of putting it. America was a stony ground, there waved the banner of the Lost Cause (a curiously pessimistic phrase which assumes a future condition, rules out, with a crushing finality, the possibility of a victorious outcome). Most everyone was interested in the cause and cure of the surrounding social horrors, but few were deeply involved.

Meanwhile, in another sector of the college, crowds, including a few of the hard-liners (a little escapism is good for the soul: Cabell was one of the three favorite authors of the class of 1932, together with Eugene O'Neill and Edward Arlington Robinson) and many of the Utopians, were involved, as spectators and adherents, in a world far from the sources of power, but a world of Victory. It is Saturday night in December, and across the cement campus (though we were not without trees) one hears the *Allegaroo* (the famed cheer baffling to etymologists) urging on our basketball team to yet another triumph.

3. Allegaroo

Coached by Nat Holman, the City College basketball team taught us the meaning of victory. Week after week, in the flowery reports of the metropolitan sports writers, in the cold and immutable statistics of the box-score, we were taught the meaning of victory. These triumphs, to which the world paid so much attention, were based on the principle of a weave around a flexible pivot. That would be the man in the bucket, usually a bit more impressive in height than his team-mates. The game was coming to the end of its primitive hierarchical organization: the rangy center, the shifty forwards, the dogged guards. Now this man in the bucket was tall—that meant six feet ("he's a six-footer"), the way tall today is seven feet (there may have been giants in those days, but they were not on the basketball courts). The other four players moved around this pivot, this center, worked in and out of the corners, using all manner of feints and reversals ("shake him off"), worked the ball into the pivot, who sometimes took his shot, but mostly looked to pass off to a free man, a man in the clear (how marvelous to be in the clear), one who through speed, agility, mobile intelligence, had shaken off his opponent, and was *one step ahead* of him. All the weaving, screening, elaborate ball-handling, the famed City razzle-dazzle, was calculated to shake this one man free under the basket, for the lay-up shot. These shots were hardly missed—much higher percentage than the remarkable 50 per cent which today's pros average over-all—and if the man was fouled, that was in the act of shooting, and it usually meant two points from the foul line.

So you built up a lead, and then, at a certain point, you began to freeze, to kill time, that most precious of commodities, what it is we are forever and unsuccessfully trying to contain, but here we were destroying it, fighting not so much the timekeeper as the clock, canny metaphysicians trained in the settlement houses, the Y's, the school playgrounds, the streets, meaning the fire-escape rungs which doubled for the peach-box rings of James A. Naismith (he the founder of the game), for we didn't get *too* many of the high-school stars. So we wove and scored and froze, and if the final score was 31-25, well that was a victory, that was worked into the flowery prose of the sports writers, the irreversible statistics which spelled victory to

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the hungry heart. Like so many elaborate skills, this amazing team-play—now you see the ball, now you don't—a kind of competitive socialism in action, was based on many tedious hours of practice in fundamentals, so many kinds of passes, dribble techniques, shooting styles (never off balance). But all that day-to-day boredom, interminable and wearing hours of practice, was buried (the way the iamb and dactyl are buried in a great poem), in the flash and dexterity of these winning combinations, in the dithyrambs of victory. We rarely lost on our home court (any home court is worth a half dozen points in familiarity, crowd support, the give of the backboard, etc.) and seldom lost away from home. Defeat was not the style of the City basketball team, every defeat was a shock, a surprise, even an accident.

Now many of these victories, and this is the moral nub of it, were won over famous colleges and universities, those we today term prestigious. Our victories were important beyond the actuality of score; immigrants or (mostly) sons of immigrants, we triumphed over the original settlers, retrospectively hacked out for ourselves ("hacking": a basketball term) a place in the aboriginal wilderness, became Americans, became winners, understood what it meant to belong, the way we never belonged as critics of society (though that, too, is a traditional way of belonging). We came out of the settlement houses, off the streets, into what seemed the mainstream of American life, for we received newspaper space the way the big-league baseball teams did, and the politicians and celebrities who died. And all this based on the fundamentals of shooting and passing and dribbling, of a complex team play meant to shake a man loose, to put him *one step ahead* of his guard, to build up and protect a lead (an extreme of competition, but without exploitation) against the onslaughts of time and teams whose forebears (some of them, anyway) had landed on Plymouth Rock off the *Mayflower*. And this pride, this need, was reflected in our attitude toward famed alumni.

4. Ancestor Worship

Milton Munitz, philosophy professor at NYU, tells the story of a student who had just come out of a philosophy class and rushed into the office of Professor Morris Raphael Cohen.

"Look," cried the student, "can you help me?"

"What is it?"

"I am very upset about this."

"Well?'

"It has just been proved to me that I do not exist."

"Why are you coming to me?"

"I want you to prove to me that I *do* exist. Could you do that?"

"Well," said Professor Cohen, "it is not impossible, I could try, but tell me, young man, to whom should I address this proof?"

This existential-type identity crisis was rather atypical of the times—worry about employment in an increasingly jobless world set up tensions different from those produced by fear of imminent, universal destruction—and we went in for a kind of ancestor-worship, did not pray to our famed alumni, but were very proud of those who had made their way in the great world. Upton Sinclair, the powerful Socialist tractarian and novelist, ranked high in the list. So did Felix Frankfurter and Senator Robert Wagner. We were, curiously enough, impressed by the financial wizardry of Bernard Baruch. Rumors abounded, the most spectacular of which was that Leon Trotsky had been a student in the Evening Session in the course of his short stay in New York City. He would, at the time, have been a man near forty, but there *were* people of that age in the Evening Session. So why not Trotsky? Mark Twain and Albert Einstein had spoken in the Great Hall of the college, which didn't exactly make them part-time students, but it wasn't as though they had no connection at all with the school. Anyway, they were the kind who would have gone to City had they been brought up in New York. We tossed around a wide variety of names—Lewis Mumford, John B. McMaster, the historian; Robert H. Lowie; James K. Hackett, the actor; Alexander Smallens, Ira Gershwin, John Kieran, Edward G. Robinson—we enjoyed mentioning these names, and others, depending on our interests, enjoyed the knowledge that so many of our boys (for the preceding is just one typical medley) had made the big time. We admired accomplishments against odds (going through college, from homes not usually affluent, was working against odds) and "it is no accident" that our totem was not one of the great beasts of the jungle, lion or tiger, but the industrious beaver. Did we not number among our alumni great bridge-builders—George W. Goethals, who built the Panama Canal, and David Steinman? And did not our graduates fairly honeycomb (though our totem was not the bee) the professional sectors of New York life, with doctors, teachers, lawyers, judges, to say nothing of the Civil Service and the business world? And again it is no accident that the opening line of our Alma Mater song should refer to

Sturdy sons of City College

—a modest adjective among possible adjectives of praise. These middle layers of accomplishment we took for granted, our deeper feelings went out to those who had achieved a more signal fame. No doubt the going economic debacle made more vivid the image of worldly success, and this success was responsive to a certain defensiveness (cockiness being the other side of the coin). Now the ancestor worship seems contrary to the struggle of the generations which Lewis Feuer has been emphasizing in his articles on Berkeley (it's rather curious to note the opposition to basic psychoana-

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lytic facts of life he's been affirming), but there is no contradiction between the ancestor worship and the struggle against the elders (of which struggle we had our fair share), it is the family conflict transformed to society, a dubiously higher plane. At any rate, we were fiercely proud of our great progenitors, sneering at the same time at worldly success, and reserving our deepest admiration for the justice fighters (City or not) and the exemplars of disinterested intellect. That brings us back to Morris Raphael Cohen.

5. Our Teacher

You know how it is about some people? The prospect of seeing them intrigues, could be someone you love, maybe a friend, or a public figure of unusual power and charm (*not* charisma). It can even happen with a teacher, someone you see on a regular basis, three times a week at the same hour, in the same place. So it was with our teacher, we approached his room with expectancy, with a certain amount of trepidation (for he uncovered our ignorance, that ignorance a shameful thing), with the sure knowledge that we would not be let down. He never let us down, we always left a bit more confused, a bit wiser, always more hopeful, even giddy with hope, for he was a living example of the power of reason, was forever setting us on explorations into the labyrinth of truth, from which one always returned with prizes of worth, dazzling prizes. It was even better than beating Harvard in basketball. Bound as we are from day to day in an endless species of criticism (just look out the window, and you see contaminated air), I am happy to praise our teacher, though I will not avoid his faults. Let me get them out of the way immediately. Some say that Morris Cohen was cruel in the classroom, that he had a way of humiliating a student, maybe enjoyed that discomfiture. I think that is way off base, and could only be said by those who did not take thought seriously, who for one reason or another denigrated thought. Morris Cohen did not rate modesty high in the virtues, and had a certain amount of vanity. Perhaps, like Socrates, he took pleasure in exposing contradictions, in leaving a student with no way out, but this was not basically a personal matter, so how could it be cruel? I suppose he did not see every easy or thoughtless answer as reflecting a personality problem, but if you push that kind of determinism too far, there is no right or wrong, and what would be the function of a teacher? He was not among the keenest in the way of individual psychology, and with some students should have tempered his severity (with others he could have been even tougher), but that severity invariably disappeared in the flow of the argument. The argument was the thing, finally the emotion went into that. We fared better if we were thoughtfully wrong rather than conventionally right. He opposed the follies of fanaticism, and in his rather imperceptive critique of psychoanalysis, feared, I think, for his lamp of reason, that it be snuffed out by the hot winds of irrationality (even a hot wind will blow out a candle), generated by a glorification of the unconscious. Like that of an actor, the reputation of a teacher is an ephemeral thing (the sound movie gives the actor a better shot at immortality, but that movie has not yet gone into the classroom). Unless the discourse is written down (lucky Socrates had his Plato), time swiftly obliterates the most brilliant analysis, what is finally remembered are anecdotes, apocrypha, stray remarks, and an image. I summon up this man (about five foot seven), with his great head and brow, jutting chin, and his dancing eyes, which moved in the way of severity or approbation, as though to ask: "What do you *mean* by this?," or, as though to say: "Good, good, all will be well, continue the struggle, the truth will prevail."

So were we chastened and so were we encouraged. One recalls his famous probing, combative style—a kind of smiling struggle to the death. The room was electrified, we jumped to the defense of our fellow-student, but our teacher took us all on, in a razzle-dazzle of knowledge, of analytic power, of fighting intellect. But truth was the quarry, and we were really fellow-participants in the hunt. There was another style, a kind of entrancement—he stood at his ease, his eyes looked off, away from us; we recognized his mood in an instant, the timid ones straightened up, for he was not seeking us out, our ignorance was safe for the moment, he was bemused, followed some wraith of thought into the caverns of history and mind, as though he were alone, but for our sakes nevertheless. We were safe, could even day-dream, for the year was coming to an end, and our college days, the horrors outside that window were coming closer, the class was at its ease, our teacher was entranced, but now his eyes were coming back to us, there was a question to be asked, and pursued, and yet another question. We girded for the struggle, against the remorseless voice of reason, which taught us over and over again that if we fear thought and intelligence, we are but deluded and perishable brutes, but if we love and pursue thought we need not be ashamed of our ignorance (which is easily, or not so easily, countered by knowledge), might even help keep alive the fitful light our teacher so passionately cherished, might even make something of ourselves in the world where irrationality was at a premium.

6. Some Omissions

I have neglected mention of the college's noncoeducational character. Men, to quote Hemingway, without women. There were boys too, some of them preternatural whiz kids (looked maybe twelve or thirteen) hot out of Townsend Harris Hall—our Andover—even wearing knickerbockers.

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But give one of them a piece of chalk and the use of a blackboard in a math class, and he'd have us all, including the teacher, cowering in a corner. But where were the girls?

The fairest of the sex
are on 68th and Lex.

So sang one of our humor columnists. But there was something odd in the relations between City and Hunter (we were brother-and-sister schools, so maybe the incest taboo was at work). I used to hear of literary/philosophical meetings at which both schools were represented—the accounts didn't indicate that life ran *too* high (more Matthew Arnold than the Charleston), but I'm probably jealous because nobody invited me. I remember the curious feeling, in the gray area between amazement and incredulity, on seeing, years later, a girl wearing a CCNY sweatshirt. The current presence of the girls must be playing Hobbes (always a favorite game in the government classes) with the school song, to say nothing of the effect it must be having on certain kinds of discussion. Is the *Circulation of Commodities* or the Kronstadt Rebellion the kind of thing you'd want to talk about with girls? But that was no problem of ours. The problem of Total Maleness no doubt requires deeper attention.

Nor have I gone into the details of the struggle, on specific issues, between the administration and the students, nor made estimates of President Frederick B. Robinson and other members of the Administration, nor of the faculty, nor gone into the composition of the student body, the nature and variety of our publications, the styles of political action as compared to today's style (the nod, I think, goes to today's pragmatic idealism as against the ideology—cruel and sentimental—of our time), the life and doings of the Intramural politicians, deepest practitioners of the Art of the Possible. I have said nothing of the curious fraternity get-togethers in the seven minutes between classes at specific points in the Lincoln Corridor on the ground floor of the main building (a parochial touch), nor of the more collegiate aspect of the basketball games—girls, dates, parties, victory celebrations (though we couldn't get the Bronx landlords to free Tom Mooney). I have said nothing of the lazy afternoons in Lewisohn Stadium, watching some of the track men jogging, or maybe the lacrosse team at practice, the strolls into Morningside Park or along Riverside Park (we were surrounded by natural wonders), the drugstore lunches ("Buddy," asked a panhandler in a *New Yorker* cartoon of the time, "can you spare 20¢ for a double-rich malted?"), the witticisms in the humor magazine (chap leaning over the rail of a transatlantic liner, the caption: "A Contributor to the Atlantic"), the violence of some of the classroom discussions (we had not only Marxists, but Thomists, Aristotelians, Talmudists, Pragmatists, Symbolic Logicians, all kinds of Neo's and Crypto's, all sorts of positions and all sorts with no positions at all, for some people can believe without holding a position), and the torpor in other classrooms. I have omitted many other factors, problems, events, activities, and personalities, all grist for other mills (I throw in the name of John Stuart and his gifted father in grateful remembrance of *College Humor* Magazine), enough omissions, no doubt, to have flunked me in any writing course.

7. The Eager Beaver

The main thing about City College as I lived it is that it was a place where young people were learning, and where the process of learning had a certain excitement, and led to further learning, further growth. The particularities of a given time are less important than this process, which nevertheless lends the weight and drama which always make the contemporary the most interesting. We learned from one another, we learned from our teachers, we learned from the world outside, we learned from our books and from ourselves. We did not all learn at the same rate, some were less interested than others, some were hardly interested at all. But for those who wanted it and were drawn to it, the world of knowledge and meaning and commitment and process was there for us to explore, and if you do not explore that world when young, you will never learn to explore it at all. It is easy to end such a remembrance on a dying fall, create an archaic sense to time past, to an institution that has no doubt been transformed, but I don't have that feeling about the matter at all. This is not a forgotten past that is being dredged up from the sewers of history. When a couple of inhabitants of East European towns meet, in the West, after long separation, they cry out: *landsman!*, translated as *old neighbor* (but it sounds better in Yiddish); when two Texans meet in the big city, after long separation, they holler at one another: "You ornery critter you," "you seventh son of a horse thief" (sounds better in Mark Twain); when a couple of City College men meet, after long separation, that effusiveness is absent, but we size one another up with interest—there is a bond, a kind of exclusiveness, a sense that we had a good thing going for us, maybe something special. That's certainly my feeling, I was always proud to be a City College student, I knew of nothing better.

Against the continuing struggle by the economy-minded to destroy CCNY as a free institution, it is argued that the college more than makes up for the money spent by the quality of its alumni, who pay back in greater measure by virtue of their labor, their tax money, etc. True enough, but the heart of the matter is elsewhere. We were told that we ought to feel grateful for this free education, but gratefulness is a two-way street—the

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society, too, was benefiting, and continues to benefit from the kind of kids this school graduates. It is not too clear why free education pretty much stops in America after high school. The story of City College is the best argument for universal free higher education.

THE push toward learning, the need for learning, emphasizes the contemplative, brings to mind the marvelous recitals in the Great Hall of our world-famous organist Samuel A. Baldwin, recalls the Gothic spires which put us (architecturally, too) in the tradition of great universities. Any description of the typical City student of the time (one who never existed, but typical in the way of the most significant, even the best, qualities) has to emphasize, too, the outgoing, the combative. An extreme of this combativeness showed up in a kind of insolence, an airy flouting of authority, tradition, a putting to rights of age-old institutions, of some misguided teachers. This gall was joined by a liveliness and sharpness of mind, refusal to take matters for granted, an inclination to challenge, to have something proved, to deepen the sense of the argument. ("A characteristic of rebellion," wrote Charles Ives, "is that its results are often deepest when the rebel breaks not from the worst to the greatest, but from the great to the greater.") This combativeness showed up in struggles with the administration, in struggles among student groups, in arguments among students; it was a reflection, a reinforcement of the life of the city, the brash newcomer among the great cities of the world. "Ah, you're a City College boy." There might be contempt in that *Ah* (nothing but a bookworm), anger (bunch of radicals), envy (to have missed out on something), approbation, meaning that you are a serious boy, that you sought learning for its own sake and to put it to use, that you were some curious compound of a scholar, a basketball player, an agitator, a wise guy, a solid citizen, an unsparing critic, a searcher for the truth, a fighter for the good cause, an eager Beaver.

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Sentimentalizing the Jews

ROBERT ALTER

Beginning with this issue, ROBERT ALTER *joins* MILTON HIMMELFARB *in conducting this department. Mr. Alter's articles will appear four times a year—*in *March, June, September, and December. Mr. Himmelfarb's articles will also appear four times a year—in January, April, July, and October. Mr. Alter (who holds degrees from Columbia, Harvard, and the Jewish Theological Seminary) is assistant professor of English at Columbia and the author of* Rogue's Progress.

THE PECULIAR cultural phenomenon which some choose to call an American Jewish literary renaissance is by now showing signs of having overstayed its critical welcome: one begins to suspect that too much has been made of what may not have been such a significant or valid development in the first place. There is no question that a great many writers now active in America are of Jewish descent. This hardly justifies, however, those critics, readers, publishers, members of the organized Jewish community, and a few of the writers themselves, who all insist on the Jewish character of this literary activity in order to weight both its contemporary and traditional implications.

It ought to be self-evident, first of all, that a literary renaissance can take place only where there is a general cultural milieu alive enough to nourish an original, distinctive literature. A case in point is the extraordinary flowering of Hebrew poetry in Spain from the 11th to the 14th centuries—a movement which has been seized on by some overly optimistic Jewish observers as an analogy for contemporary Jewish writing in this country. But a genius like Shmuel Hanagid, the poet-vizier of 11th-century Granada, transcended his Arabic models in his contemplative personal lyrics and in his great battle poems not because of some mysterious Jewish "sensibility," but because his imagination could draw freely and variously on a living literary tradition that ran from Genesis to the Responsa. A necessary precondition for the literary renaissance created by Hanagid and his successors was a deeply rooted autonomous Jewish culture which could supply these sources of significant innovation from within the larger context of Arabic secular culture.

By contrast, the so-called renaissance of American Jewish literature has come into being out of what is, from the Jewish point of view, almost a complete cultural vacuum. Given the general state of Jewish culture in America, it is quite understandable that nearly all the American Jews who have become writers are just like other Americans, if not even more so. The typical involvement in Jewish culture consists of an acquaintance with *gefilte* fish and crass bar-mitzvahs, a degree of familiarity with overstuffed Jewish matriarchs, and a mastery of several pungent Yiddish synonyms for the male organ. With such a cultural heritage at his command, the American Jewish writer is vaguely expected to produce imaginative work rich in Jewish moral insights, alive with Jewish fantasy, humor, and pathos, in a prose whose varied textures will reproduce the exciting differentness of "marginal" experience.

One of the stories in *Roar Lion Roar,** a first volume of fiction by Irvin Faust, includes a delightful incident that can be taken as a paradigm for the predicament of many American Jewish writers, especially the younger ones who have begun to publish recently. Myron Leberfeld, the teen-age protagonist of "Miss Dorothy Thompson's American Eaglet," has ventured forth from his native Brooklyn, impelled by wartime patriotism, to work on a Vermont farm. There he is confronted—for in such a setting, nothing less than a confrontation could be expected—by the inevitable farmer's daughter, who is, of course, a piece of quintessential America: backwoodsy, big-busted, good-natured, and irrevocably naïve. Rita Ann, a hospitable girl in any case, is thrilled by the idea of having so exotic a creature as a Jew in her own home. But she inadvertently confounds the newcomer when she turns to him with the request, "Myron, talk Jew to me." Myron, with a knowledge of "Jew" scarcely larger than Rita Ann's, rummages through his memory and finally seizes on a phrase recalled from a favorite German record of his aunt's: "Ish leeba Dick," he pronounces mysteriously.

> The effect was exhilarating. "Oh," Rita Ann moaned softly, "say that again."
> "Ish . . . leeba . . . Dick."

* Random House, 213 pp., $3.95.

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"Oooh. What's it mean?"

This I remembered, at least to a point. "I love you . . . Dick."

Faust, whose stories are refreshingly free of portentousness, does not mean this encounter to symbolize anything, but the analogy to his generation of American Jewish writers is in some cases painfully close. These younger writers, appearing as they do after the successes of Bellow, Malamud, and Roth in the 50's and especially now after the spectacular popularity of *Herzog* and the remarkable revival of *Call It Sleep,* often end up playing the role of a pseudo-exotic Myron opposite the American reading public's gaping Rita Ann. The one quality which seems most to distinguish Jewish writing in this country is its growing self-consciousness about its own Jewishness. Everyone is by now aware of the fact that literary Jewishness has become a distinct commercial asset, and at least Bellow and Isaac Bashevis Singer have shown that it can be an artistic resource as well. Some of the younger writers thus feel called upon to "talk Jew" in their fiction, but, unlike Myron in the story, they do not seem to realize either their own ignorance or the falseness of their position.

One clear symptom of this general condition are the palpably *ersatz* touches of Jewish local color that have been appearing with increasing frequency in recent novels and stories—garbled Yiddish, misconstrued folklore, plainly impossible accounts of synagogue services and religious observances. Faust again offers a convenient model in his "Jake Bluffstein and Adolph Hitler." The story is transparently a *conte à thèse* about Jewish self-hatred and the Jew's fascination with moral qualities dramatically antithetical to his. This schematic presentation of a complex psychological phenomenon is embarrassingly inept because Jake Bluffstein, as even his name suggests, has been imagined with no more individuality or ethnic authenticity than the stereotyped Jew of a tired anecdote. Jake Bluffstein's thought and speech are flavored, if that is really the right word, with an oddly limited set of Yiddishisms—the usual obscenities, and a few words like *shikkah* (which Faust seems to think is Yiddish for "drunk") and *tzoris* (which is construed as a singular noun). The place of worship Bluffstein frequents is an androgynous sort of affair that is sometimes described as an old-fashioned *shul* and alternately spoken of as a "temple" with an Americanized rabbi. The entire story was obviously a mistake on Faust's part—he does considerably better with other materials—but it is a mistake which illustrates the compromised position into which many American Jewish writers have worked themselves.

In more general terms, what has happened over the last decade is that a new sentimental literary myth of the Jew has gained what appears to be general acceptance in American fiction and criticism. A sentimental literary myth usually represents the failure of a culture to come to terms with some vital aspect of its own life; most often, the culture responds to its own inadequacy by projecting its secret fears, its unadmitted desires or illusory fantasies of itself onto a patently unreal image of a figure from another culture. (One has only to recall the image of the South- or East-European slinking through Victorian fiction, dark, sultry, sexually potent and attractive, an embodiment of bold and perhaps unsettling possibilities of freedom.) Such myths are sentimental because they are not live responses to any observable realities but rather sets of contrivances—stock situations, characters, and images—intended to produce certain desired emotions or predetermined states of imagination.

TO UNDERSTAND how a sentimental myth about the Jew has been fostered in recent American literature, we have to remind ourselves that the so-called American Jewish writers are—with rare exceptions—culturally American in all important respects and only peripherally or vestigially Jewish. It seems to me that this elementary fact needs a great deal of emphasis. We are accustomed to admiring the marginal man's supposed advantage in perspectives on the disparate worlds he straddles: so many great modern writers have been outsiders, the argument runs, and this has been pre-eminently true of the Jews. But the fact is that the role of the Jew—and especially the intellectual Jew—as an outsider in American life has generally dwindled into an affectation or a stance of pious self-delusion.

Ironically, what most American Jewish writers are outsiders to is that very body of Jewish experience with which other Americans expect them to be completely at home. The result of this reversed situation is a reversal of the critical perspective which is an outsider's proverbial birthright. That is, the American writer of Jewish descent finds himself utilizing Jewish experience of which he is largely ignorant, and so the Jewish skeletons of his characters are fleshed with American fantasies about Jews. The result is a kind of double sentimental myth: the Jew emerges from this fiction as an imaginary creature embodying both what Americans would like to think about Jews and what American Jewish intellectuals would like to think about themselves. From the larger American point of view, the general assent to the myth of the Jew reflects a decay of belief in the traditional American literary heroes —the eternal innocent, the tough guy, the man in quest of some romantic absolute—and a turning to the supposed aliens in our midst for an alternative image of the true American.

Leslie Fiedler has for years been an ideologue of the new sentimental myth; his most recent novel,* because it illustrates the myth with the engaging clarity of a well-drawn comic strip, marks out most of the important guidelines that

* *Back to China,* Stein & Day, 248 pp., $4.95.

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both generations of American Jewish writers seem to be using for their literary ideal of the Jew. Baro Finklestone, the hero of Fiedler's novel, is, predictably, an archetypal outsider—a Jew in Montana, an intellectual among the hicks, a square despite himself among hipsters, and so forth. Like all Jews who are allowed to be the protagonists of novels, Finklestone is an inveterate *shlemiel*, but in his very ineffectuality and muddle-headedness, he is also—Fiedler must insist—morally sensitive in a way that others are not. He is not just a well-meaning, perennially protesting liberal; he really cares about other human beings, he carries the world's guilt on his shoulders, and he is driven to a sort of self-immolation in an attempt to expiate that guilt. This last touch, incidentally, introduces the by-now-familiar motif of the Jew as Christ, which itself is a good indication of the degree to which the fantasy-image of the Jew in American fiction is American and Christian in its deepest imaginings.

Finklestone, as a moral preceptor without real disciples, also illustrates one version of the fashionable archetype with diagrammatic neatness in being a father in quixotic search of a son. (Here Leopold Bloom lurks in the background.) Since we no longer like to take our moral preceptors straight, Fiedler supplies his with elaborate camouflage. Finklestone is a compassionate and honest man—in the bed of his best friend's wife; a seeker for the truth—through the agency of mescaline. Like the heroes of many American Jewish novels, he alternates between the role of the zany and that of an updated version of the Hebrew sage, "caught between an impulse to play the clown and a resolve to act the professor." But one begins to suspect that the former role is intended mainly to make the latter more palatable. I, at any rate, become skeptical when Fiedler writes of his archetypal exiled hero that there is a "trace of something oriental about him which had made him feel always a visible stranger in the ultimate West." This sounds perilously close to Daniel Deronda, that well-meant but silly Gentile fantasy of the Jew as Mysterious Stranger, a dark, exotic figure from the East who has been through the crucible of suffering and emerged a creature of saintly gentleness, with unguessed inner stores of moral wisdom.

THE GENERAL formula, in fact, for the Jew as literary hero in this new version of an old sentimental myth is Daniel Deronda with cap-and-bells, Daniel Deronda in the cool world or on the dissident fringes of academia, perhaps flaunting conventional morality, certainly talking and acting bizarrely, but Daniel Deronda nevertheless. Whatever the particular twists, he is a man with a luminous past and a great if desperate dream for the future, his heritage of suffering and survival providing him with a unique adeptness in the ultimate science of knowing how to be.

Earl Rovit's *The Player King*,* a first novel published this past spring, could serve as a textbook introduction to this whole literary image of the Jew. Rovit is a novelist with dazzling verbal gifts (in sharp contrast to all the other new writers) and with an artistic self-consciousness that is occasionally an asset but more often a serious impediment to his writing. His novel is framed by opening and concluding dialogues between the author and a Yiddish-accented alter ego. Moreover, there is an inner frame, the journal of a novelist who is presumably writing the principal story; and inserted between chapters of what one hesitantly calls the novel itself are parodies of imagined reviews of the book and a *Paris Review* interview with the (pseudonymous?) author of *The Player King*. In all this literary talk, which is sometimes very bright and often quite funny, Rovit suggestively characterizes the myth in which his characters are caught up and out of which he—"vaudevillian of the interior consciousness . . . crucified clown of the esthetic high wire"—has contrived a distinctive narrative mode.

According to Rovit, or rather one of his several personae, the two great myths of Christian literature, Christ and Faust, the Victim and the Victimizer, are dead, and their place is now taken by the myth of the Jew, at once a grotesque figure of fun and an uncanny shaman-hero:

> The Wandering Jew has taken off his cloak (the mysterious greasy black of the ghetto, the usurer's pit, the worn entrails of the peddler's pack) and he is naked revealed for the first time. There is a white scar on his side which has healed into a pious caricature of the comic mask. . . . The feet are strangely pale and long-boned, and he rolls from heel to ball in dark reminiscence of the Mourner's Chant.

There is unresolved irony here: it is hard to know just what is meant seriously and what satirically. This very irresolution is Rovit's way of hanging onto both the grotesque mask and the sentimental image behind the mask. But the mythicized Jew, sheltering in that "mysterious greasy black of the ghetto," is clearly present both in this passage and elsewhere in the novel, for all the ingenious disguises Rovit provides him.

"Mysterious" is notoriously a dangerous word to use in a novel, even half-ironically. It is usually a sign that the novelist is in some way asking us to assume complexities of feeling which his art has not in fact been able to evoke. In this connection, there is a very funny moment in *The Player King* which inadvertently points to the core of hollowness in the fashionable mythic version of the Jew. The protagonist discovers that the zipper of his fly won't close, and, shielding himself with a copy of *Ebony*, he makes his way to the nearest tailor, who he finds has just locked up for the day. When the little old Jew refuses

* Harcourt, Brace, & World, 368 pp., $5.95.

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to open the door, the stricken hero explains that "It's worse than trouble, it's tzoris I got." This is the magic tribal password: the door swings open and the tailor, grinning, answers, "Trouble is trouble, but tzoris—dat's someding else."

But is it really? The two words, of course, were created in different historical circumstances, each was gradually molded into its own subtle contours of meaning by different kinds of experience. But the pressure of collective experience that has shaped the Yiddish word is scarcely present in Rovit's book: it is the word itself which is waved like a magic wand, just as in this and other novels the name or idea of the Jew is invoked and the naked invocation is expected to conjure up all sorts of images, from epiphany to pogrom, of a unique history and a unique moral heritage.

ONE OF THE most bizarre expressions of the sentimentality of this myth is the motif of conversion or quasi-conversion that has been improbably cultivated in American Jewish fiction. The model, of course, is the circumcision of Frank Alpine at the end of Malamud's *The Assistant*. There is something instructively peculiar about that act. Circumcision, after all, is a theologically serious matter; it means sealing a covenant in the flesh between a people and its God. But the idea of being a Jew in Malamud's novel—as is generally the case in American Jewish fiction—is shorthand for a set of moral abstractions: Jewishness is equated with an ethic of hard work, integrity, acceptance of responsibility, forbearance in distress, and so forth. Since there is no necessary connection between any of these qualities and being a flesh-and-blood Jew, the symbol inflicted on Frank Alpine's flesh seems gratuitous, or, rather, obtrudes as a merely symbolic contrivance.

More often, the conversion motif appears under the guise of discipleship. One clear example is the relation between Angelo DeMarco (another wayward Italian lad) and Sammy the orderly in Edward Wallant's posthumously published novel, *The Children at the Gate*. Angelo, who doesn't believe in the genuineness of feelings and would like to think of human beings as machines, is taken by Sammy on the rounds of suffering at his hospital to be taught the lesson of redemptive love. Sammy, in keeping with the general formula, has the mannerisms of the bizarre comedian: his mouth is full of obscenities, his past is queer and sordid, and he is generally suspect at the hospital. But of course he has a real Jewish Heart, and for all his bizarreness he is a true Jew—which, as one often discovers in American Jewish fiction, means that he turns out to be a true Christ. *The Children at the Gate* manages to be a moving book, but it would have been more completely honest, I think, if its ethical guide had more authentic credentials for his role than a command of Yiddish slang and a ghetto childhood.

Perhaps the most ingenious variant of the conversion motif is the metamorphosis of Nick Lapucci into Lipshitz in Jerome Charyn's recently published second novel, *On the Darkening Green*.* (The Italians may begin to wonder why they should be made the object of all this fictional missionary zeal. Perhaps it is simply a matter of sociological convenience, since Italian and Jewish neighborhoods have often bordered on or overlapped each other.) Nick Lapucci has from the outset some suspiciously Semitic features: he is bookish, unathletic, an outsider in a neighborhood of tough (Jewish) kids, and, of course, something of a *shlemiel*. So he is ripe for symbolic conversion when he takes a job as counselor-jailer at a Jewish school for delinquent and retarded boys in upstate New York.

The requisite Jewish elements of grotesqueness are generously multiplied and unusually contorted in this novel. The upstate institution is run like a concentration camp by its director, Uncle Nate, a self-deluded sadist and Jewish chauvinist, a sort of comic-gothic version of Faust's Jake Bluffstein, the Jewish Nazi. Probably the most important person for Nick on the school's staff is Rosencrantz, who works for Uncle Nate as part-time chaplain, part-time chauffeur, and full-time thorn-in-the-side. A defrocked rabbi, he is one of the stock types of the new sentimental myth of the Jew, possessing in fine balance through his heretical-clerical status all the necessary qualities of grotesqueness and moral insight. He is way outside institutional Judaism, yet significantly linked with it. He is utterly unillusioned, yet he ultimately evinces faith in the possibility of becoming human. Though a lost soul himself, he somehow manages to be a guide to others. Virtually crazy, he is nevertheless reliable in teaching his Torah of stubborn survival and of the seductive danger of hate and violence to all men, the persecuted as well as their persecutors.

Nick's eventual success in becoming part of the weird society of wayward and deranged Jewish boys means, predictably, his entrance into the sphere of significant moral experience. The rebellion in which he participates with them is the moral climax of the novel because it demonstrates that real solidarity is possible and that people can muster enough concern for their own human dignity to protest being deprived of it. Charyn handles his bizarre moral microcosm imaginatively, but his inclination to treat the novel as parable unfortunately encourages the tendencies inherent in the sentimental myth to schematize and simplify moral issues. And his enlisting a Jewish group to serve as moral paradigm reinforces the fashionable conception of the Jew as primarily a symbolic entity: to become truly human one must become True Israel, like the elect in the Book of John.

Hugh Nissenson's *A Pile of Stones*,† another recent first volume of fiction, is worth mentioning

* McGraw-Hill, 244 pp., $4.95.

† Scribner, 173 pp., $3.95; paperback, $1.65.

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because it provides such a striking contrast to all the books we have been considering. Nissenson is, as far as I can recall, the only genuinely religious writer in the whole American Jewish group. His fiction represents an attempt to follow the twisting, sometimes treacherous ways between God and man; his stories reach out for Jewish experience in Eastern Europe, in Israel, and in America, in an effort to discover what Jews do with their faith in a God who so often seems conspicuous by His absence. Where other Jewish writers haul in our forefathers by their pious beards to provide scenic effect or symbolic suggestiveness, the introduction of such figures in Nissenson's work is an act of serious self-examination: can the God of the kaftaned grandfather still be the God of the buttoned-down grandson, especially with the terrible shadow of the holocaust intervening between then and now?

This exploratory relationship to Jewishness reflects an order of imaginative integrity lacking in the writers who end up merely using Jewishness, but it is not without its own artistic difficulties. Religious fiction—witness Graham Greene—is often problematic: it is probably easier on the whole to talk precisely and persuasively about encounters with transcendence in poetry than in narrative prose. Nissenson's fiction, moreover, seems to suffer from some of the intrinsic limitations of the modern intellectual's religion-in-the-head, culled from the pages of Buber, Heschel, Herberg, Tillich, Niebuhr, and the rest. There is an odd element of abstractness in his stories; they read like neatly arranged laboratory situations for testing out a series of problems of faith and theodicy. But whatever the drawbacks of this kind of writing, one senses that it is about something real, and that there is a necessary connection between the Jewishness of its subjects and what it has to say.

Nissenson, however, is obviously a rather special case. *A Pile of Stones* offers welcome relief but hardly an indication of a change in the current trend of American Jewish fiction. It allows one to hope for more writers who will try in varying ways to observe the Jew as a real human being, but what seems immediately in prospect is a continuing parade of Jews as holy sufferers, adepts of alienation, saintly buffoons, flamboyant apostles of love—in all the twisted, grinning masks of a literary convention that keeps literature from making imaginative contact with reality.

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A MAJOR DIN TORAH*

Isaac Bashevis Singer

THE DISPUTES THAT were brought to my father for arbitration—he was a rabbi in Warsaw—were usually petty ones. The sums involved would be about twenty or, at the most fifty, rubles. I had heard that there were rabbis to whom "big" cases, involving thousands of rubles, were brought, and each side would be represented by its own arbitrator. But this happened only to the rich rabbis who lived in the north of Warsaw, not in our part of town.

But one winter a major lawsuit was brought to our house. To this day I do not know why these wealthy people chose my father to be their judge, for he was known as a naïve, unworldly man. My mother sat in the kitchen and worried. She feared that he would not understand these complicated matters. Early that morning, Father had taken down the *Hoshen Mishpat* and immersed himself in it: if he was not an expert on questions of business and commerce, he would at least be sure of the law. Soon the litigants came and brought their arbitrators—themselves rabbis. One of the litigants was tall, with a sparse, black beard and angry, coal-black eyes. He wore a long fur coat, shiny galoshes, and a fur hat. His lips held a cigar in an amber cigar holder. An aura of importance, learning, and shrewdness emanated from him. When he removed his overshoes, I saw gilt letters on the red lining and was told that these were monograms. He had brought an arbitrator—a rabbi with a milky-white beard and young, laughing eyes. The rabbi had a round pot-belly and a silver chain dangled across his silk vest.

The second litigant was a small, gray mannikin, dressed in a fox pelt, a thick cigar between his lips; he had brought a spokesman who had a broad, yellow beard, a nose like the beak of a bird, and round, birdlike eyes to match. When he removed his hat he remained, for a few moments, bareheaded. Then he put on a silken skullcap of the style worn by Litvaks.

In our house, the study of Torah was the only subject of importance, but these men brought with them an element of worldliness. I gaped and wondered. The rabbis—the arbitrators—exchanged jokes. They smiled well-practiced smiles. My mother served tea with lemon and cookies left from the Sabbath, and the rabbi with the laughing eyes addressed her jestingly.

"Rebbetzin, perhaps you can do something about bringing the summer?" He did not avert his eyes, like my father, but looked straight at her.

My mother reddened like a schoolgirl and seemed for a moment at a loss. Then she regained her composure and answered, "If we have winter, it is probably because the winter is needed."

Soon the actual hearing began; the case involved thousands of rubles. With all my might I tried to understand what was being discussed but I soon lost the thread. It was about buying, selling, ordering wagonloads of merchandise. They talked of credit, net value, gross income, account books, ledgers, interest, notes. The negotiating rabbis were well versed in the terminology of business affairs, but my father was constantly asking for explanations. As his son I suffered pangs of shame and embarrassment on his behalf. From time to time the discussion of the case would be interrupted by women from the neighborhood who came to ask whether their freshly slaughtered chickens were kosher.

The *Din Torah* lasted not one, but several days. During this time I learned that not all rabbis resembled my father. These two took out fountain pens and scribbled on sheets of paper—lines, circles, squares. Every few hours I was sent out to buy refreshments: apples, cakes, even sausages and cold cuts. My father never touched meat bought in a sausage shop, even one that was strictly kosher. But the other rabbis ate the smoked meats and discussed them like connoisseurs. At other times the argument would be halted while one of the rabbis told a story. Then the other would not want to lag behind, and he too would tell an anecdote. Then they got to talking about foreign countries and different resorts, and I learned that these rabbis had been in Germany, in Vienna, and in other distant places. My father, to be sure, presided at the head of the table but he seemed to shrivel in the presence of these worldly divines and their smooth conversation.

After a while I began to understand the issues and realized, to my amazement, that the arbitrators were not really concerned about who was right and who wrong, what was true and what false, but that each was looking for twists and turns to justify his party and to contradict the arguments of his opponent.

I resented these clever rabbis, yet at the same time I envied their children. From the way they spoke I realized that in their homes there were rugs, sofas, lovely things of all kinds. Occasionally one of the rabbis would even mention his wife, Mrs. So-and-So, and this was the greatest wonder of all. Never had I heard my father refer to my mother when he was speaking with other men.

The longer the *Din Torah* lasted, the more complicated it became. The table was covered with a thick layer of papers, calculations. They called in a bookkeeper who brought a stack of account books. The moods of the tall man with the black beard were constantly changing. One minute he spoke calmly, deliberately, as though each word cost a gold piece, then suddenly he would begin to shout, banging his fist on the table and threatening to file suit in a governmental court. The gray little man answered sharply, angrily, maintaining that he was not afraid of any court. For his part, the lawsuit could be brought before the highest tribunal. And the two spokesmen, although they were literally waging war against each

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other, still chatted amiably, lit matches for each other's cigarettes, and continued to repeat to each other the sayings of rabbis, scholars, and famous lawyers. My father had almost stopped speaking, or asking for explanations. From time to time he would glance longingly at his bookcase. For the sake of the business quarrels of these rich men he had had to give up time he would otherwise have devoted to the Torah, and he yearned for his books and commentaries. Once again the world, with its calculations and falsehoods, had intruded into our life.

I was constantly sent on errands. One minute someone sent me for cigarettes—and the next, for cigars. For some reason a Polish newspaper was needed and I was sent for it. But most frequently I was sent for different things to eat. I had not known that anyone could eat so much—so many kinds of sweets and delicacies—and on ordinary weekdays, to boot. The rabbi with the laughing eyes wanted a tin of sardines. Apparently the two rabbis ate so much because it was all paid for by the litigants. They said so openly, albeit as a jest and with a wink of the eye.

ON THE LAST DAY all was shouting and tumult. Every few minutes one or the other of the litigants would try to run out, and his rabbi would hold him back. Perhaps they were only acting? I had learned that they often said one thing and meant another. When they were angry, they spoke softly. When they were satisfied, they pretended to be enraged. When one of the rabbis was away, the other would enumerate all his sins and weaknesses. Once the rabbi with the laughing eyes arrived half an hour earlier than the others and proceeded to revile his opponent with the yellow beard and birdlike eyes. He said, "That one is no more a rabbi than I am the king of England."

My father was stunned. "How is that possible? I know that he makes decisions on ritual questions."

"His decisions, ha. . . ."

"But if that is so, he could—may such things not come to pass—cause other Jews to eat forbidden foods."

"Well, he may know how to look up a reference in the *Be'er Heitev** . . . . He was in America already."

"What did he do in America?"

"He sewed pants."

Father wiped the sweat from his brow. "Are you serious?"

"Yes."

"*Nu,* he probably needed the money. It is written that *it is better to flay carcasses than to take alms* . . . work is no disgrace."

"True, but not every shoemaker is a Rabbi Yochanan. . . ."

My father had told my mother that he would be almost happy if this *Din Torah* were taken to another rabbi for judgment. He had already diverted too much of his time from his studies. He could not devote more energy to all these tangles and "fractions" (a term my father used for any arithmetical process more complex than addition, subtraction, and multiplication). He foresaw that in any case the litigants might not abide by his decree. He was also afraid that the suit would eventually be brought into the civil courts, and he might be called as a witness. The very idea of standing before a magistrate, taking an oath on a Bible, sitting among policemen—cast terror upon him. He groaned in his sleep at night. In the morning he would rise even earlier than usual in order to be able to recite his prayers in peace and to review at least one page of the Gemara. He would pace up and down in his study and pray aloud, in a trembling voice:

> O my God, the soul Thou gavest me is pure. Thou didst create it, Thou didst form it, Thou didst breathe it into me. Thou preservest it within me, and Thou wilt take it from me, but wilt restore it unto me hereafter. . . .

He was not simply reciting a prayer, but seemed almost to be pleading his case before the Master of the Universe. I thought that he kissed his phylacteries and the fringes of his prayer shawl with a fervor more intense than ever.

Yes, the final day was a stormy one. This time not only the litigants, but even the negotiators shouted. The erstwhile amity be-

* *Be'er Heitev*—a "digest" of the Code of Laws.

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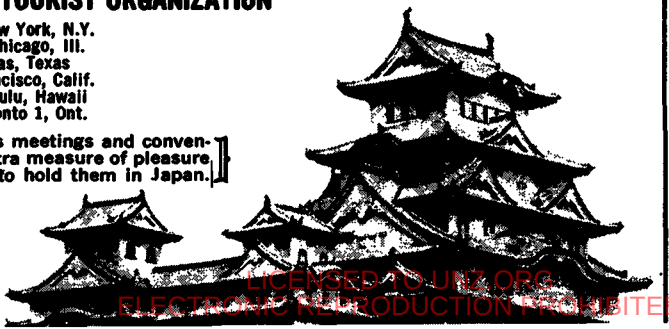

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tween the two spokesmen had evaporated, and they were now quarreling and abusing one another. They argued and shouted and gave vent to their pent-up emotions until their strength was exhausted. At that moment Father took out his kerchief and ordered the litigants to grasp it, a token of their submission to his decision. I stood by, trembling. I was certain that my father had understood nothing of all these entangled arguments and that he would pronounce a decree as ill-fitted as a blow for a Sabbath greeting. But now it became clear that in the course of these past days my father had, after all, grasped the significance of the issues at stake. He pronounced his old and tried formula of compromise: an equal division. . . .

For some time after he had given his decision, there was silence. No one had the strength to speak. The man with the sparse beard stared at my father with savage eyes. The little man made a grimace as though he had accidentally swallowed something sour. The rabbi with the yellow eyes smiled cynically, displaying a mouthful of yellow teeth. I noticed that one tooth was gold-covered, and this convinced me that he had indeed been in America.

When all had had time to recover, they began to tear my father's decree apart. Insulting innuendoes were made. Father stated his argument simply. "I asked you whether you wanted an absolute decision, or were willing to accept a compromise."

"Even a compromise must be reasonable!"

"That is my decision. I have no Cossacks at my command to enforce it."

The arbitrators withdrew to confer with their clients. They muttered, argued, complained. I remember that the loudest protests came from the side that had actually benefited the most from the decision. After a while they seemed to have decided that the compromise was not, after all, so bad and that perhaps there really was no better way. The litigants, who were business partners, shook hands. The rabbis demanded that I go down to bring refreshments, so that all

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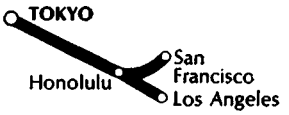

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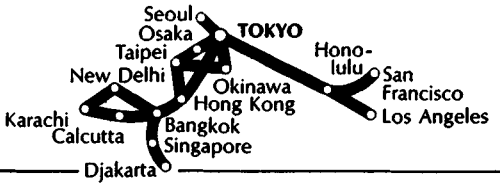

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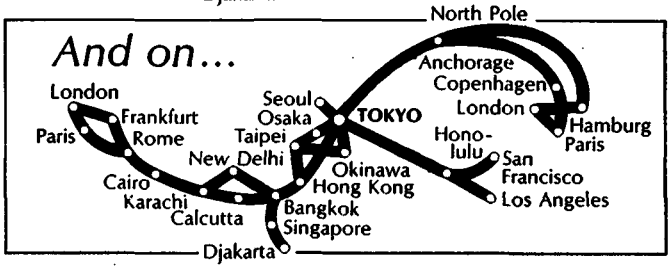

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could recuperate from the fighting and quarreling. Again the two were the best of friends, and one even said that he would recommend the other to handle a case he knew of. At last everyone had left. In the study there remained only cigar smoke, a table full of papers, fruit skins, the remains of various delicacies. Father had received a generous fee—twenty rubles, I believe—but I could tell that he felt an unpleasant aftertaste. He asked Mother to clear the table as quickly as possible. He opened the doors so that the odors of wealth and worldliness might escape. The litigants were, after all, men of business—but the overly clever rabbis had caused him deep pain.

As soon as my mother had cleared the table, Father sat down to resume his studies. He reached for his books eagerly. There, in the holy books, one did not nibble on sardines, one did not make innuendoes, or flatter, or speak words of double meaning, or tell slippery jokes. There holiness, truth, dedication reigned.

In the Hasidic prayer house where my father prayed, the men had heard of the sensational *Din Torah*. Businessmen discussed it with my father. They said that he was becoming known in Warsaw, was gaining a reputation, but my father waved this talk aside with his hand.

"No, it is not good. . . ."

At that time, too, my father began to talk to me about the *Lamed-Vov*—the thirty-six hidden saints—the simple Jews, the tailors, shoemakers, and water-carriers upon whom depends the continued existence of the world. Father spoke of their poverty, their humility, their appearance of ignorance so that none would recognize their true greatness. He spoke of these concealed saints with a special love, and he said, "One contrite heart is of greater worth before the Almighty than thirty silk gaberdines."

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER, *the well-known Yiddish writer, is a frequent contributor to* COMMENTARY. *The present memoir, translated from the Yiddish by* CHANA KLEINERMAN, *will be included in the collection* In My Father's Court, *to be published early in 1966 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.*

THE RULE OF LAW IN THE SOUTH*

Haywood Burns

There is a town in Mississippi called Liberty, there is a department in Washington called Justice. This anonymous legend appeared on the wall of the headquarters of the Council of Federated Organizations in Jackson, Mississippi in the summer of 1964. It expresses much of what many civil-rights workers feel about the role the federal government has played—and not played—in the administration of justice in the South. The view of these civil-rights workers is quite simple. It is that under the First Amendment to the Constitution, Negroes possess the right to speak freely, to assemble peacefully, and to distribute literature; that they possess under the Fifteenth Amendment the right to vote; that under the Fourteenth Amendment no state official may deprive them of these rights or otherwise discriminate against them because of their race. These constitutional provisions are the "supreme law of the land" (Article VI), and it is the duty of the President of the United States to see that the laws are "faithfully executed" (Article II). Despite the guarantees of the Constitution and federal law, however, Negroes in the South (and whites working with them) have been repeatedly deprived of their rights both by private individuals and by state and local officials. Because they have failed to act effectively in many such instances, the President and the Department of Justice have not been fulfilling their constitutional and other legal obligations.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they catch hell from both sides. So read a sign in the office of the former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Burke Marshall, in Washington, D.C. The Department of Justice, as the law-enforcement branch of the executive, has borne the brunt of criticism not only from those who feel the federal government has not done enough, but also from those who feel it has gone too far. Marshall has generally answered both sides by invoking the delicate balance that must be maintained in federal-state relations. He recognizes the authority of the federal government to act in the area of civil rights but emphasizes the limitations upon its power to eliminate racial injustice. In the Gino Speranza lectures which he delivered in the spring of 1964 at Columbia University (and subsequently published under the title *Federalism and Civil Rights*), Mr. Marshall took the position that "only political power—not court orders or other federal law—will insure the election of fair men as sheriffs, school board members, police chiefs, mayors, county commissioners and state officials."

In line with this thesis that Negro voting strength is the primary means of correcting inequities existing in the South, the Justice Department under the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 filed more than forty suits in cases of voting discrimination and intimidation. Each of these voting cases involved an elaborate procedure. First, the Justice Department would request permission to inspect and photograph the voting records of a certain area, and if the registrar of that area did not comply, a court order would have to be obtained. Copies of voting application forms, sometimes numbering in the thousands, would then be examined and a "pattern and practice of discrimination" established to the satisfaction of the Justice Department. Only at that point could the case go to a federal court—where it would be heard by a federal judge who might have been hostile to the suit from the outset.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act obviates the need for these cumbersome court procedures. Rather than providing for individual suits against discriminatory practices, the new law sets up a uniform standard for registration. In areas where qualifying tests are used for discriminatory purposes and there is less than 50 per cent registration, federal referees will register Negro voters for all elections. This is a great improvement, but, as civil-rights workers are quick to point out, the new law will not by itself

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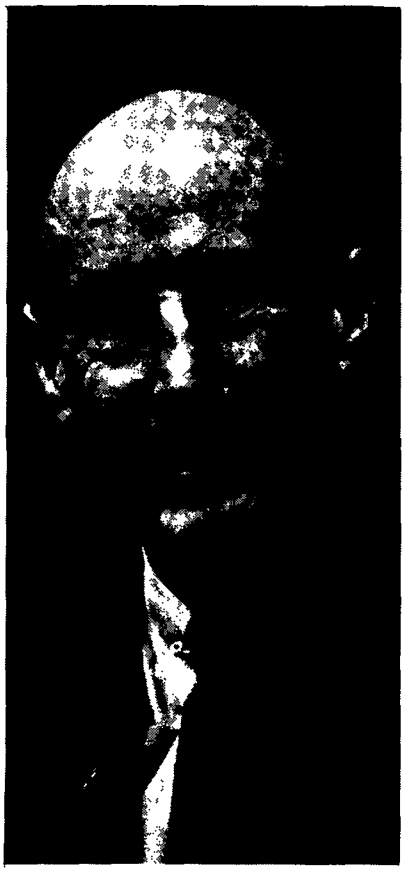

to realize how this American used language. He was articulate, but he was more than that. His words nourished us, gave us courage, spoke what we felt... to Russia or the U.N. or the Democrats or the Republicans, or even to each other.

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bring Southern Negroes to the polls in sufficient numbers to make good their demands. Even where earlier government voting suits were won and the registrars enjoined from further discriminatory practices, many Negroes still were unable to register. For the truth is that changes in voting regulations and laws are of little practical consequence so long as there is no effort to protect those who attempt to exercise their right to vote. James Forman of SNCC sums up the situation as follows:

> Take Mississippi. The government has filed suits. O.K. But people are still scared. They tell us, "All right, I'll go down to register, but what are you going to do for me when I lose my job and they beat my head?" And we can't do anything. The local folks are beginning to doubt that it's worth the risk.

To be sure, the new Voting Rights Act provides that those who interfere with its implementation will be subject to federal prosecution. But similar provisions have existed for some time in the United States Code. Under Title 42, Section 1971b of the U.S. Code, the government can enjoin anyone, "whether acting under color of law or otherwise," from intimidating those who are attempting to exercise their franchise in a federal election. Under Title 18, Section 594 there are criminal penalties of up to a thousand dollars fine and one year in jail for "whoever intimidates, threatens, coerces or attempts to intimidate, threaten, or coerce any other person for the purpose of interfering with the right of such other person to vote or to vote as he may choose." These provisions have rarely been implemented by the Justice Department, however, and potential Negro voters remain intimidated by the quite justified fear that they will be beaten, their homes bombed, their families threatened, or their livelihoods destroyed.

That the Justice Department has seldom made use of these broad powers to deter intimidation of voters is, at least in part, a consequence of its narrow interpretation of "voting," which the Justice Department seems to consider is more or less restricted to the process of registering and casting ballots. But in the context of life in Alabama or Mississippi, the effective enfranchisement of the Negro requires a range of education and supportive activities that will make him aware of his political rights and protect him in their use. Segregationists are quite capable of taking this broader view, and it is not difficult to show that much of the violence and persecution that have been inflicted on civil-rights workers as well as on local Negroes have the conscious purpose of keeping the polls white.

CIVIL-RIGHTS workers have not been alone in pointing to the failure of a state such as Mississippi to protect its citizens and in calling for broader federal action to put an end to the reign of violence and lawlessness. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the government's fact-finding and advisory agency on problems of civil rights, published in January 1963 a report by its Mississippi Advisory Committee, composed of prominent local citizens, which reinforces the position of those within the civil-rights movement who have been asking for more federal intervention:

> . . . terror hangs over the Negro in Mississippi and is an expectancy for those who refuse to accept their color as a badge of inferiority. . . . The state government of Mississippi is not sufficiently concerned with the task of protecting the rights of all the citizens of Mississippi. . . . [Its] attitude . . . rather than being one of protection, has been one of obstruction. . . . The Committee finds that the Federal Government has not provided the citizens of Mississippi the protection due them as American citizens. The Department of Justice has acted in good faith, but the present interpretation of the function of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department is unduly and unwisely narrow and limited.

The standard rebuttal of Justice Department spokesmen like Robert Kennedy and Burke Marshall has been to assert that "We have no national police force," and to disclaim responsibility for the protection of citizens' rights on the grounds that such protection would upset existing federal-state relations. Nicholas Katzenbach, formerly Mr. Kennedy's deputy and now Attorney General, explained to a college audience in April 1964 that civil-rights workers would have to depend upon state and local officials to protect their rights because "to do anything else would be making major changes in the federal system." Mr. Katzenbach, like Mr. Marshall before him, has also publicly deplored the fact that the colleges do not make this matter clear to militant students who "through despair or ignorance of the federal system seek to invoke the power of the federal government to enforce personal rights." Though recognizing that there are grounds for such "despair," Mr. Katzenbach has gone on maintaining that "there is no answer which embraces both compassion and law."

However final such pronouncements may seem, they by no means close the legal question of federal intervention. When Attorney General Kennedy, following the disappearance of the three civil-rights workers last June, told an NAACP delegation that the situation in Mississippi was a "local matter for law enforcement," and that his power to act in this area was "very limited," his position was challenged almost immediately by a group of 29 law professors from six of the nation's leading law schools. The main thrust of their criticism had to do with the Justice Department's failure to distinguish the *powers* of the executive branch from its *policies*. They held that the decision of the Attorney General not to take further action in Mississippi was based on considerations of policy, which were open to debate, but not upon the power to intervene, which was not. The professors cited Title 10, Section 333 of the U.S. Code which provides that:

> The President, by using the militia or the armed forces, or both, *or by any other means* [my emphasis], shall take such measures as he considers necessary to suppress, in a state, any domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy, if it—
>
> (1) so hinders the execution of the law of that state, and

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> of the United States within the state, that any part or class of its people is deprived of a right, privilege, immunity, or protection named in the Constitution and secured by law, and the constituted authorities of that state are unable, fail, or refuse to protect that right, privilege, or immunity, or to give that protection; or
> (2) opposes or obstructs the execution of the laws of the United States or impedes the course of justice under those laws. . . .

After discussing the "misleading" effect of identifying the President's powers with his policies, the law professors concluded:

> It is at once disappointing and ironic, that the Department of Justice, which has been bold beyond precedent in successfully urging the Supreme Court that the judiciary possesses the broadest powers to enforce the constitutional assurances of equality, should now discover non-existent barriers to executive action.

In support of their position, the critics of the then Attorney General's stand might also have cited a telegram sent to Governor Wallace during the Birmingham crisis by President John F. Kennedy:

> Under this section [Title 10, Section 333] which has been invoked by my immediate predecessor and other Presidents as well as myself on previous occasions, the Congress entrusts to the President all determinations as to (1) the necessity for action; (2) the means to be employed; and (3) the adequacy or inadequacy of the protection afforded by state authorities to the citizens of that state.

Notwithstanding all this, the Justice Department was slow to correct its official position, and it was only after the Selma crisis in March 1965 that Attorney General Katzenbach began publicly to discuss the question of the *desirability* rather than the *power* of the federal government to send troops to protect the rights of Southern Negroes.

The statement that "We have no national police force," moreover, can be as misleading as the confusion of powers and policies. The plea for federal protection does not envisage the formation of a national police force. We already have a federal police force—namely the FBI—which makes arrests for violations of federal law in such areas as bank robbery, espionage, kidnapping, and narcotics traffic. There is no legitimate reason why it cannot make similar on-the-spot arrests without warrants if agents have reasonable grounds to believe that the person to be arrested has committed or is committing a felony in violation of federal civil-rights statutes. This power is specifically given FBI agents by Title 18, Section 3052. Section 3053 empowers federal marshals to arrest as well, and under Title 28, Section 549, marshals "may exercise the same powers which a sheriff of such state may exercise in executing the laws thereof." The use of such powers was recommended by a conference held at Notre Dame in 1963 on Congressional civil-rights legislation:

> New and more refined legislative remedies are not required to reach this blatant disregard of rights. To contain and disarm lawlessness, a clear federal presence is required at the first outbreaks. We think that the Attorney General has the power in the face of determined lawlessness supported by an acquiescent or conspiratorial community, to send federal marshals and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for on-the-spot protection of the exercise of federal rights. . . .

The succession of events in Selma, Alabama which culminated in the bloody Sunday of March 7, 1965, points up the necessity of early preventive action by the federal government. Despite long-standing and continued harassment and intimidation of Negroes and civil-rights workers, it was only *after* a young Negro, Jimmie Lee Jackson, had been killed by a state trooper, only *after* hundreds of demonstrators, children as well as adults, had been tear-gassed, whipped, and clubbed, only *after* Reverend James J. Reeb had had his skull crushed and was left dying on a Selma street, that the Justice Department moved to bring charges against private citizens and state and local authorities, and to seek a federal injunction against Governor George Wallace, Albert Lingo (head of the state troopers), and James Clark (the local sheriff) to prevent them from interfering with the right of Negroes to register, vote, and demonstrate peacefully. If these same men had been enjoined earlier from interfering (in the language of the injunction) with "lawful, peaceable demonstrations on behalf of the rights of Negroes by attempting forceably to disperse the demonstrators or seeking to impose unreasonable conditions on the demonstrators," and if there had been a federal force sufficient to make the injunction effective, the first March to Montgomery could have proceeded as peacefully and safely as the one that was eventually made.

WHY, then, is the federal government so reluctant to take this initiative? The usual explanation is that doing so might encourage local authorities to abdicate their responsibilities altogether and usher in a reign of such public rage, violence, and chaos that nothing less than a federal occupation would be necessary. Thus, Burke Marshall has contended that federal marshals do not enjoy the respect of Southerners, and he cites the riot at Ole Miss during the Meredith affair, in which the marshals were almost overwhelmed by students and local people before troops were sent in to reinforce them. Generalizing from this incident, Marshall argues that the use of federal force tends to escalate, and he concludes that the decision to use federal marshals in Mississippi must envision the eventual likelihood of a military occupation. Some civil-rights workers have recommended just that—"a marshal on every porch"—if this is what it must take to bring law enforcement to such places as Neshoba County, Mississippi, where a county official bluntly told a group of NAACP officers, "In Neshoba County you haven't got any civil rights."

There are ways, however, of approaching the problem which do not require either a large-scale take-over of police functions that properly belong to the state or a policy of regarding federal intervention as a dangerous last recourse. Advocates of this position

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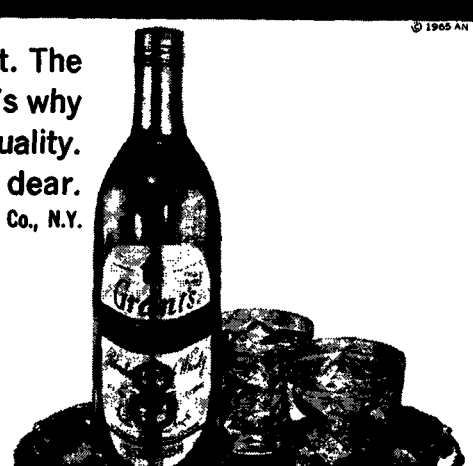

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press not for federal occupation, but rather for what they call a greater "federal presence"—that is, a prominent use of federal authority to enforce law and to foster a new atmosphere of public justice and order. As Hazel Brannon Smith (among other well-informed white liberal Mississippians) has repeatedly pointed out, most of the white citizens of the state, though far from being integrationists, are law-abiding. If a norm of lawful and orderly compliance with the law could be firmly established, most of the people would go along with it rather than with the policies of violent resistance that currently prevail. The role of the federal government within the state would be primarily to establish through guidance and example the rule of law and to deter acts of official and private violence. Where the federal "presence" itself was not sufficient, direct action in the form of injunctions against law-enforcement officials who abuse their authority, coupled with more arrests under the civil-rights statutes, would be employed to strengthen its influence.

Those who urge a greater federal presence in the South hold that Burke Marshall's example of the Oxford riot is atypical. To call in the federal marshals to integrate a university is quite different from maintaining a more general, but less blatant, course of action in which federal officers go about their duty on a day-to-day basis enforcing the law and protecting the rights of individuals. Rather than precipitating violence, an approach of this kind would be more likely to prevent it. The Justice Department's strategy has been that of neutralizing the overtly violent and restoring a modicum of order; but such a strategy is founded upon the continued restraint of Negroes and civil-rights workers who must endure terrorism until the federal government believes it has sufficient cause to act. If, however, Negro militants refuse to wait patiently until a crisis stage is reached and begin to answer violence with violence, the result will be a much more dangerous state of lawlessness than we have yet seen.

As with other aspects of its authority, the Justice Department has taken a narrow view of its powers of injunction to prevent violence and other forms of interference with the exercise of constitutional rights. "There is nothing to do unless something happens," Mr. Marshall has said, but his position has been criticized by authorities on constitutional law such as Professor Charles Black of Yale, who point out that the Justice Department may seek injunctions against "massive and widespread violations of fundamental law." Mr. Marshall's critics assert that the government could go into the federal courts and secure injunctions to enjoin policemen or other officials from interfering with the right of free speech, the right to distribute leaflets, the right to picket peacefully, the right to hold peaceful demonstrations, or the right to vote and register without intimidation.

Mr. Marshall contends that "legal concepts have developed in terms of individual personal rights, but the rights of masses of an entire race are affected all at once." Having formulated the problem in these terms, he concludes that "the solution is more within the control of the states than anywhere else." Whatever validity this argument may have in other areas of law, it flies in the face of the historical and legislative background out of which many of the civil-rights statutes have arisen. These statutes were designed specifically to prevent the intimidation by terror of Negroes—as a "race"—that is still being practiced today. Since the Hayes-Tilden compromise of 1876 the federal government has been derelict in carrying out the Constitutional mandate of the Reconstruction laws which were intended to insure that the Negro masses would no longer be constrained by the bond of servitude in any form once they were given the status of free men and citizens. Indeed, since 1876, many of the civil deprivations which this legislation was meant to eliminate have remained substantially in force.

Mr. Marshall has further said that the federal courts are reluctant to interfere with a state criminal process, and that federal judges will not enjoin a *pending* or *future* state criminal proceeding. Later in the same lecture, however, he admits that such injunctions have been obtained, that there is no *constitutional* inhibition against them, but rather certain "notions" or "concepts" of federal-state relations. Once again, what begins as an argument based on a lack of power becomes a statement of policy, of preference. Similarly, Marshall asserts that the Attorney General needs special statutory authority for injunctions in non-voting cases. A federal court in a recent Louisiana case, however, found that where a complaint "is based on a state law which is contrary to the superior authority of the United States Constitution, the Nation, as well as the aggrieved individuals, is injured." The breadth of power implied by the Supreme Court's reasoning in *In re Debs* has been questioned, but the decision nevertheless points up the fault in Marshall's position. The government had secured an injunction against a railroad strike, although Congress had passed no statute giving it the right to ask for an injunction in such a case. The Supreme Court stated that:

> Every government, entrusted by the very terms of its being with powers and duties to be exercised and discharged for the general welfare, has a right to apply to its own courts for any proper assistance . . . whenever the wrongs complained of . . . are in respect of matters which by the Constitution are entrusted to the care of the nation . . .

There are other ample precedents for this enforcement power in both federal statutory and case law. In *Ex Parte Siebold* (1879), for example, Justice Bradley justified the broad range of federal power in these terms:

> We hold it to be an incontrovertible principle that the government of the United States may, by means of physical force, exercised through its official agents, execute on every foot of American soil the powers to command obedience to its laws and hence the power to keep the peace to that extent.

It should be borne in mind that injunctions have considerable power as preventive measures. In the South, the sanctions for disobeying them are more certain of being applied than in a criminal situation,

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since trial for contempt of an injunction does not require a jury. A Congressional sub-committe proposal to strengthen Justice Department powers in this area was dropped at the insistence of the then Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, who claimed that the use of such powers would damage federal-state relations and undermine the control by states of police functions. To be sure, the Justice Department had itself taken action running counter to this position: in 1961 it enjoined the prosecution of a Mississippi Negro registration worker on the grounds that such prosecution would intimidate other Negroes in the area who were attempting to vote; later, in 1964, the Department sought an injunction against Sheriff Jim Clark of Selma, Alabama after he and other officials had repeatedly abused and harassed Negroes attempting to register and vote in that city. Both of these cases, however, involved voting rights, where the power to seek injunctions has been specifically granted by statute.

Along with those statutes and rulings which support broad federal action in cases of emergency, there are many statutes that provide a legal basis for day-to-day federal action in the states. Title 18, Section 241, one of the main civil-rights criminal statutes, makes it a crime for

> two or more persons to conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States, or because of his having so exercised the same.

This statute, drafted during Reconstruction with the Ku Klux Klan specifically in mind, is potentially a very powerful weapon against private acts of violence aimed at keeping Negroes from voting. Yet it was virtually ignored by the federal government in recent times until shortly after the disappearance of the three civil-rights workers in June 1964, when the FBI arrested three men on the spot in Ita Bena, Mississippi for interfering with voter-registration workers. Other federal statutes furnish the Justice Department with grounds for intervention in the case of burnings and church bombings. Title 18, Section 837 covers the illegal use of explosives and threats to damage or destroy "real or personal property by fire or explosives," and Title 18, Section 1074 covers "flight to avoid prosecution for damaging or destroying any building or other real or personal property."

THE OTHER MAJOR civil-rights statute with criminal sanctions is Title 18, Section 242, which is directed toward violation of constitutional rights by policemen and public officials. However, the simple fact of deprivation of a civil right under the color of law—and there have been thousands of such incidents—is not sufficient evidence because the Supreme Court, in *Screws* v. *United States* (1945), ruled that such deprivation must be shown to be "willful." This stipulation makes convictions under 242 very difficult to obtain. The problem could be resolved in part by obtaining a more liberal construction of Section 242 in the courts (e.g., "reckless disregard" of civil rights instead of willful deprivation). But in order to do so the Justice Department would first have to seek a broader interpretation of Section 242 at the trial court level, and then either it or the defendant would have to appeal up through the appellate level to the Supreme Court to determine whether the Court would strike down the broader interpretation or sanction it.

Generally, in applying federal criminal statutes, a grand jury indictment is required before a case can be brought to trial. One way of avoiding this problem with Section 242, however, is by means of a procedural device known as an "information." A charge under 242 is a misdemeanor, and misdemeanor cases do not need grand jury indictments before they can be heard; a U.S. Attorney need only file a sworn statement, or information, setting forth the charges against the defendant. This is, in fact, the procedure of the Justice Department in most criminal misdemeanors, with the exception of those that pertain to 242. Recently the Department has begun to use the device of information, but this represents a departure from past practice and cannot yet be regarded as general policy.

More prosecutions under 242 might also arise if the Justice Department did not rely so heavily on the decisions of some of the local U.S. Attorneys on whether to prosecute. The Civil Rights Commission has pointed out that some of these Attorneys have "consistently opposed the prosecution of police brutality cases" involving deprivation of civil rights. More generally, because of the difficulty of obtaining convictions from a Southern jury in civil-rights crimes, the federal government apparently has chosen to rely more upon community education and public relations. Roy K. Moore, head of the FBI in Mississippi, spends a good deal of his time speaking to local groups about the role and functions of the FBI in the state, hopefully to alter its image as a group of "outsiders" and "invaders." Moore emphasizes that the interest of the FBI is only in the lawless element of the community, and he likes to point to the fact that among the bombers arrested during the reign of terror in McComb there were not only a militant segregationist but also a bank-robber.

In most cases, however, the parties involved in racial violence and terror are less likely to be professional criminals than "respectable" members of the community—an elected official, a small businessman, a farmer, or even a minister. Moral suasion alone is inadequate to alter their behavior or impair their influence. What is needed is a sustained effort to bring such cases into court and expose the individuals and groups involved by means of carefully presented evidence.

The reluctance of the Justice Department to make such an effort stems in good part from the lack of success it has frequently experienced in obtaining indictments or convictions in civil-rights cases in the South. There is also fear that the more such prosecutions are seen to fail, the more difficult it becomes to maintain its effectiveness in the racial crisis. Yet the question remains whether an unwillingness to prosecute civil-rights violations merely betokens to the Southerner—black and white—that the government is indifferent

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to most such violations and has not significantly altered its traditional policy of minimal action and non-intervention. Moreover, well-developed prosecutions, whether they result in convictions or not, serve to educate those white Southerners capable of being educated about the gross inequities of their society and also serve to inform and strengthen public opinion elsewhere in the country on the necessity of change. Finally, one can argue that a credible threat of federal investigation and prosecution furnishes some degree of deterrence to violating a Negro's right and person where almost none has existed until now.

If it should continue to be impossible to win convictions in civil-rights cases, the government will also have to reconsider its resigned acceptance of the present system of trial by jury as it operates in the Deep South. The constitutional right to jury trial in certain types of criminal cases is regarded almost as sacrosanct, but there are also guarantees in the Constitution which are designed specifically to abolish a double standard of justice. In cases tried in Mississippi, Negroes and civil-rights workers obviously do not receive the same protection under the jury system that is accorded to segregationists held for civil-rights crimes. Indeed, a systematic study both of the cases that have been brought and of those that have not been brought to trial shows that the jury system in Mississippi works as an instrument of the state in perpetuating white supremacy. Instead of its futile reliance upon a historic legal right which is now employed to evade and subvert its original purpose, the Justice Department could approach the problem more creatively. A group of twenty-one Congressmen, for example, suggested to Attorney General Katzenbach that the men accused of conspiring to violate the rights of the three COFO workers killed near Philadelphia, Mississippi last summer should be tried before a judge appointed by the Chief Judge of the circuit and that a new panel of jurors should be selected which would include Negroes.

In addition to measures like these, a change in the laws regarding venue seems necessary. At present only the *defendant* has the right

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under certain circumstances to ask for such a change. Machinery is needed to enable the aggrieved party, or the government when bringing an action, to move for a change of venue to an area where the jury system could be expected to operate without undue bias. The power to "remove" civil-rights cases from the state to the federal system already exists—if the defendant has legitimate reason to believe that he will not receive a fair trial in the state courts—and since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an order from a judge refusing to grant removal is appealable. These special provisions in the legal code for coping with a discriminatory state judiciary could be of significant value when extended to cover the prosecution of civil-rights crimes. Along with pressing for these remedies, the Executive branch must also take a much more enlightened and resolute stand in its selection of federal judges in the South than it has shown in recent years.

Nor is this all the federal government could do to establish a strengthened presence in Mississippi. In an open letter to President Johnson in October 1964, 18 Congressmen set forth a program to "prevent further violence and bloodshed" in Mississippi. Their recommendations included more permanent FBI agents in the state and branch offices of the FBI throughout the state—especially in its southwest section; an FBI report on the violence in Mississippi in the summer of 1964 similar to the report on the Northern urban riots of the same summer; enforcement of 241 and 242; the convening of a federal grand jury to investigate possible connections between civil-rights violations, bombings, etc. and local law-enforcement officers; establishment in the state of a branch of the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and of the newly created federal Community Relations Service; and finally, hearings conducted by the Civil Rights Commission. (The Civil Rights Commission in fact attempted to hold hearings in Mississippi but for a time was prevented from doing so by the Department of Justice.)

The federal law-enforcement system in the South could also profitably be reevaluated and revised. Civil-rights workers have often found the FBI "cold, unresponsive and at times hostile," and the Civil Rights Commission report of 1961 concluded from statements made by J. Edgar Hoover and by former agents of the FBI that there is a certain reluctance on the part of the Bureau to become involved in matters concerning civil rights. From the Commission's report it is also evident that this reluctance is partly due to the Bureau's close cooperation with and dependence upon local police in areas other than civil rights. Thus, an agent in the South may find himself in the embarrassing position one afternoon of having to investigate the officer with whom he had been working on another case that morning. To cope with this problem, Howard Zinn of Boston University has advocated the creation of a federal force of "E" (Emancipation) Men—to work in the Deep South and in any other part of the country where they are needed to protect the Constitutional rights of persons against unlawful private or official action. They would be present at all civil-rights demonstrations, be subject to immediate calls for help, and have the power to make on-the-spot arrests. In addition, every local police station in the country would have a "hot line" direct to the regional federal agent's office, so that anyone arrested could get immediate help if needed.

In short, the problems of a strengthened federal presence in the South are not legal but political. The Department of Justice is at present limited by the political considerations involved in appropriations: although Mayor Thompson of Jackson, Mississippi had little difficulty in getting the 2.2 million dollars he requested for an armored tank and a larger police force, the Department cannot be so confident in asking for the modest sum of one million dollars to meet the Civil Rights Division's increased needs under the augmented responsibility it has been given by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Department is also limited by the amount of public support the administration can expect in taking a strong stand. But these are not overriding limitations and do not justify a policy of passivity until "something happens." Confronted by its Constitutional duty and backed by a growing national consensus on civil rights, the Executive has enough power to establish the rule of law in the South.

HAYWOOD BURNS *has worked for the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and the Council of Federated Organizations (Mississippi), and is currently attending Yale Law School. The present piece will appear in somewhat different form in* Southern Justice, *edited by Leon Friedman, to be published by Pantheon in November.*

* * *

SEX UNDER SOCIALISM

Ernst Pawel

THE SOVIET UNION'S anti-sexual revolution is now in its fourth decade, its élan seemingly undiminished by Stalin's death and Khrushchev's thaw. But objective research as to the deeper effects of this pervasive puritanism on Soviet marriage, morals, and family life has always been hampered by the lack of relevant data. Needless to say, a government that goes so far as to ban sex education will scarcely encourage social scientists to investigate the results of its own policies. Recently, however, a study—the first of its kind—dealing with just this subject, was published in the Soviet Union, and it is of considerable interest both for the information it contains and for its possible significance as a straw in the wind.

Marriage and the Family in the USSR by A. G. Kharchev (Mysl, Moscow, 1964) is, to be sure, more an anti-Western tract than a comprehensive and authoritative exploration. Armed with heavy-gauge orthodoxy, Kharchev sallies forth to charge the windmills of Western sociology as represented by a few dusty, and for the most part obscure, college textbooks. Nevertheless, there are enough gaps between doctrinaire platitudes and dogmatic conclusions to afford some fascinating glimpses of life and love in the Soviet Union today.

Kharchev, for one thing, sets the prevailing puritanism of contemporary Russia into historical perspective by describing it as partly a reaction to what, with some

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justice, he calls the "excesses" of revolution and civil war. The sexual history of the Russian revolution remains to be written, but Kharchev supplies several choice examples, among them a "Decree concerning the Nationalization of Women" passed by the City Soviet of Vladimir in 1918:

> Any girl 18 or older and not married must, under penalty of imprisonment, register at the Free Love Office of the Commissariat of Welfare. Those registered will have a choice of males between 19 and 50. The men in turn are granted the right to choose among the girls. The selection of husbands and wives will take place once a month. The Free Love Office is autonomous. Males between 19 and 50 will, in the government interest, be allowed to choose their partners regardless of the latter's consent. Any children born of such unions will become the property of the Republic.

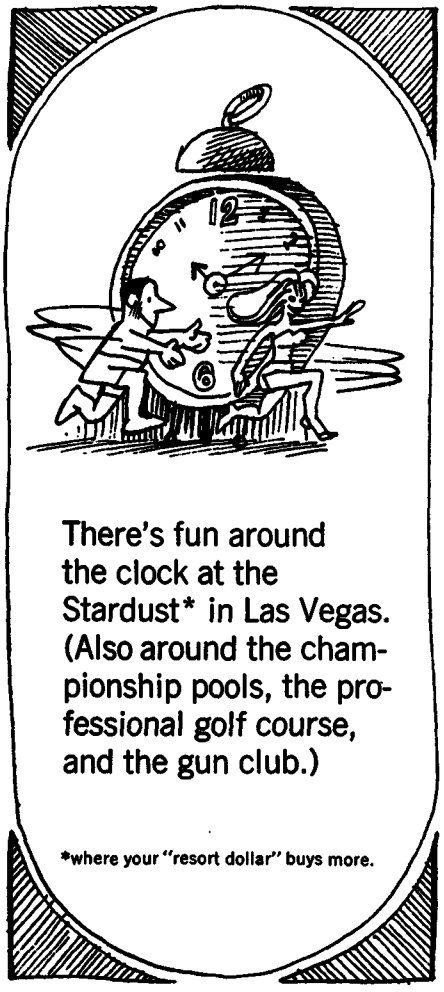
According to Kharchev, this was the sort of lunacy Lenin had in mind when he warned against peddling sexual anarchy under the label of Marxism. While insisting on measure and perspective, however, Lenin

> never at any time came out against sex education as such. But the hypocrisy so typical of the Cult-of-Personality era in our history distorted his attitude into outright opposition to sex education of any kind. Educators gradually came to regard sex as "an individual problem," to be dealt with by everyone to the best of his or her ability alone. Thus the struggle against incorrect and harmful tendencies during the post-revolutionary period led in the end to total suppression of sex education altogether; schools, educators and youth organizations no longer deal with the problem in any serious way and instead leave it entirely up to the home. . . . The so-called theoretical basis for this hands-off attitude is supplied by the concept of Communist morality as a unified whole, of which sexual morality constitutes an integral part; sex education therefore becomes superfluous at best where it is not downright harmful.

Sex education as offered in the U.S. today certainly justifies no exaggerated enthusiasm, nor are there any grounds for believing that Russians, for the lack of it, are significantly handicapped in their individual adjustment. But this rigid stance described by Kharchev points to one feature of the Stalinist 30's that has continued straight through at least Khruschchev's 60's. The Soviet government still regards sex as a capricious, explosive, intractable element in the social fabric, one singularly resistant to centralized planning, and therefore to be controlled as far as possible by other means.

This, at least, is pretty much the attitude reflected in current Soviet marriage law. The 1918 code provided for monogamous civil marriage, and for unrestricted divorce, which was granted directly by the Bureau of Vital Statistics when uncontested, and by court decrees in all other cases. In all matters involving property and family relations, husband and wife were fully equal before the law. Although full legal protection was extended only to marriages recorded in the Civil Registry, no stigma was attached to children born of unregistered unions, and the category of illegitimacy was abolished. The revised code of 1926 was even more liberal. It extended legal recognition to any unregistered marriage that had reached an obvious level of stability, as judged by such pragmatic criteria as duration. That this revision was of some practical importance may be deduced from a 1923 survey, which estimated the number of unregistered marriages at about 100,000.

A radical new departure was made in 1944. Protection of the law was henceforth limited exclusively to registered marriages; divorce, in turn, entailed greatly increased fees and vastly more complex proceedings, including a preliminary announcement in the press —a sort of banns in reverse. At the same time, the brand of bastardy and the status of "unmarried mother" were formally reintroduced into vital statistics. The new severity was coupled with an effort to bolster the birthrate by drastically tightening abortion laws and by awarding breeder medals and subsidies to outstanding fertile female (and married) citizens.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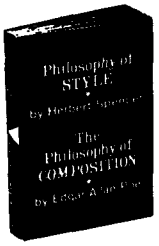

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Twenty-one years after its promulgation and twelve years after Stalin's death, this law is still on the statute books, and though Kharchev voices certain reservations, he contends that

> the factual conditions that led up to this legislation unfortunately still prevail. Therefore in our opinion any reform of admitted inequities must be sought within the framework of the fundamental goals and ideas that inspired the law now in force rather than by way of a radical break. In this spirit, the most important reform would be to grant the unmarried mother the right to collect alimony from the child's father in those cases where she was clearly the victim of proven fraud or breach of promise; at the same time, a basis in law must be worked out making it possible to distinguish such women from promiscuous females or known alimony hunters.

This touchingly broad-minded proposal to write a distinction into law between predatory females on the one hand and ravished innocence on the other merely serves to reaffirm the long-suspected spiritual kinship between perfervid Communists and the proverbial little old ladies in sneakers. Beyond that, Kharchev's conditional defense of the 1944 Code is further weakened by the very data he himself collected and which demonstrate that, quite aside from moral and humanitarian considerations, the law has had as little effect on the conditions it was ostensibly designed to remedy as similar laws in the United States have had. For example, the number of unmarried mothers in the USSR rose from 282,000 in 1945 to 2,700,000 in 1960, and of the latter, 400,000 had more than one child. These figures suggest the continued existence of a great many stable relationships that are not sanctified by registration, probably because one or both of the partners could not obtain a divorce from a previous spouse.

TURNING TO THE individual Soviet family, Kharchev begins with a predictable paean to home life under socialism, and a contrasting picture of capitalist marriage with its sexual anarchy, enslaved women, delinquent children, and aging husbands begging in the streets. Here his standard platitudes may testify either to a lack of conviction or a lack of adequate sources—there are, after all, more telling indictments of sex mores in the U.S. than August Bebel (d. 1913), J. B. Stearn's *Sisters of the Night,* and an anonymous document entitled *Are American Women Degenerating?* But having drawn a number of foregone conclusions, Kharchev proceeds to look at some of the facts. In 1962 he interviewed 500 couples who had applied for marriage licenses in Leningrad. His first question was, "What, in your opinion, constitutes the basis for a lasting and happy marriage?" No less than 72 per cent answered "love," a result Kharchev interprets as a triumph of socialism, since in the capitalist world, money and sexual infatuation are obviously the dominant motives for marriage. The answers to his next question—"Where will you live after the wedding?"—bear him out in a curious way. Only 9.4 per cent expressed the hope of finding an apartment of their own; 7.6 per cent were going to live at the wife's current lodging; 37.6 per cent either with the husband's or the wife's parents; 15.6 per cent in furnished rooms; and 9.8 per cent in dormitories (temporarily). One couple (0.2 per

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cent) was headed for Siberia; 1.4 per cent didn't know, and 10.8 per cent refused to answer. Under these circumstances, marriage for any reason except love would seem hard to imagine.

The housing shortage is at least acknowledged as a problem by Kharchev, but the full participation of women in all phases of the economy is hailed as an unmixed blessing symbolizing the ultimate consummation of equality between the sexes. The fact that about half of the labor force in the Soviet Union is comprised of women seems to support this contention, but it does not tell the whole story. Kharchev's study of Leningrad households reveals that working wives spend an average of 30 additional hours per week on domestic work—shopping is a most time-consuming activity in Russia—while men only contribute about 10 hours a week to such chores.

In view of this enormous work load and the shortage of housing, it is hardly surprising that between 1940 and 1960 the birth-rate dropped by almost 25 per cent. Kharchev also reports that in 1959 approximately 25 per cent of all families were childless, and that nearly one-half of the remainder were raising an only child. Childless marriage saddens him, but he disapproves almost as much of the one-child family, which in his opinion provides poor preparation for life in a collectivist society.*

There are other problems of adjustment as well, and Kharchev does not always approach them as a sociologist armed with statistics. Sometimes, indeed, he sounds suspiciously like a moralist:

> In Soviet society no objective factors exist that would favor sexual promiscuity; but the behavior of youth is not always directly related to prevailing economic, social, and ideological conditions, the less so since certain subjective factors may exert their influence in socialist as well as in bourgeois societies. Thus . . . Soviet education has not placed adequate emphasis on respect, dignity, and the cultivation of aesthetic appreciation. Furthermore, for a number of years the schools separated boys and girls, with the resulting negative attitudes to which this separation usually leads. Of course, under socialism the pathological concentration on sex, the flood of erotic filth and pornography . . . so characteristic of bourgeois countries cannot and does not exist; this largely protects our youth from an abnormally premature arousal of the sex instinct. But the harmful effects of other factors persist even under socialism. For one thing, there is overcrowding, there is also the discrepancy between ethical and physical maturation in individual boys and girls which creates tensions liable to lead to sexual excesses. After all, only such subjective factors can possibly explain the unsatisfactory state of our sex education.
>
> The combined effect of these factors is further enhanced by the impact of bourgeois ideology and psychology on the new Soviet generation, via direct contact as well as by radio, the press, and the arts. This by no means implies any superiority or even greater attractiveness of the ideas promoted by bourgeois propaganda; [the impact is due to] other factors, chief among them being our own occasional negligence when it comes to presenting the truth and justice of our ideas in forms accessible to all those at whom they are aimed. . . . Finally, there is one more defect that is decidedly damaging in its effect upon the moral tone of social life before marriage in the USSR, and that is the poor organization of adolescent recreation . . . and the increasingly common practice of so-called "evenings" or "bottle parties" in private quarters and homes. The effect of alcohol on people and on their sexual standards is common knowledge; its excessive consumption has always had a disastrous influence on sexual morality.
>
> No reliable, accurate facts and figures on premarital sex relations exist, nor can such figures ever be obtained. Those quoted by bourgeois sociologists are at the very best mere approximations. In any event, no special surveys are necessary for this purpose; the observations of those in daily contact with youth (teachers, educators, youth leaders, managers of tourist centers and athletic camps, etc.) are sufficiently trustworthy. And the impressions gathered from talking to these experts must lead to the conclusion that a substantial number of young people engage in sexual relations before marriage. This applies predominantly to males, but during the war and the postwar years girls were also caught up in this trend. In relations between the sexes the "personal element" has become much more important than the traditional institutions, and with the increasing independence of working youth, especially in the cities, the restraining influence of the family has declined.

Kharchev—reflecting the official attitude—obviously deplores such a state of affairs, but one wonders how this traditional hostility to premarital sex can be justified without reference to religious dogma or bourgeois psychology. Moreover, Kharchev's proposed remedy is as old-fashioned as his diagnosis: he insists that formal engagements will go a long way toward restoring virtue and chastity as practical ideals among the young.

NOSTALGIA FOR "the good old days" is certainly not confined to dogmatic Communists, but it poses a special difficulty to them in that a variety of depressing phenomena turn out to be linked not, as one had so confidently expected, to private ownership of the means of production, but rather to industrialization, urbanization, and social mobility—in short, to what is generally called progress in both capitalist and socialist countries. Divorce is a case in point. In 1959, one out of every nine marriages in the Soviet Union as a whole ended in divorce, as compared to 1 out of 5.6 in Leningrad. The latter figure, to be sure, is still significantly below the 1960 U.S. ratio of 1 divorce for approximately every 4 marriages, but the discrepancy between the divorce rate in a highly industrialized urban environment and that of the country at large tempts one to draw certain conclusions.

* Kharchev's figures are actually less than conclusive unless broken down into greater detail; thus in 1959 no less than 43.3 per cent of U.S. families had no children under 18. On the other hand, 51 per cent of heads of households were over 45; of those under 45, only 15 per cent were childless. 18.4 per cent had 1 child, 18.3 per cent had 2 children, 10.5 per cent had 3 children, and 9.5 per cent had 4 or more.

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Kharchev resists that temptation, partly on the ground that meaningful and comprehensive divorce statistics are hard to obtain in the USSR. The only figures he offers are part of a study of an unknown number of cases from the files of the Leningrad Municipal Court. The recorded grounds for divorce are as follows:

Impotence, infertility	17%
Adultery, desertion	28%
Incompatibility, loss of affection	21%
Wartime disappearance	17%
One partner sentenced to prison	3%
Return to former family	5%
Miscellaneous	9%

This single and numerically undefined sample affords no basis for broad speculations, but it does tend to show that the particular form in which individual maladjustment manifests itself is determined by one's society. Thus, the official Soviet view of neurosis as a combination of bourgeois *Weltschmerz* and hypochondria probably accounts for the high incidence of such respectably physiological problems as impotence and infertility, acceptable modes of suffering that entitle one to seek medical help.

THAT NEUROSIS in whatever guise is as much of a problem in the Soviet Union as anywhere else can also be deduced from Kharchev's remarks on children without families, and from his discussion of the so-called "institutional syndrome," the frequently severe personality damage sustained by children raised in institutions instead of families. From the outbreak of World War I to the end of the Stalin era countless millions of Soviet children lost one or both parents (Kharchev mentions "several" million civil-war and World War II orphans but omits the millions victimized by famines and purges). This is an understandably sensitive and far from academic matter, whose tragic implications in terms of later marital adjustment and parental adequacy it takes courage to contemplate with detachment. Kharchev's figures, though sketchy, do cast some light on the situation. Out of a total of thirty million schoolchildren in the 1960/61 school year, 540,000 were being educated in boarding schools. While no precise statistics are available, Kharchev assumes that the overwhelming majority of the boarding school population are either orphans or half-orphans. In support he cites a survey of Leningrad *Internat* (Boarding School) No. 36, which revealed that 325 of its 422 pupils were fatherless, 15 motherless, 16 full orphans—only 66 had both parents. Moreover, most of the children in this last category came from problem families: thus the parents of 100 out of 300 children in *Internat* No. 9 were undergoing psychiatric treatment in 1961.

In order further to explore the influence of the home, or the absence thereof, on overtly disturbed behavior, Kharchev surveyed the family situation of 500 juvenile delinquents in Leningrad in 1959/60. Of these 18 had a mother and stepfather, 2 a father and stepmother; 267 were fatherless, 25 motherless. Further investigation disclosed that in the 200 more or less complete families, the father was an alcoholic in 121 cases, the mother in 9, both parents in 30.

FOR ALL its obvious limitations, this is a pioneering venture and must be acknowledged as such. Moreover, the fact that Soviet reviewers have castigated Kharchev's timidity and ridiculed his proposed reforms as sadly inadequate may indicate a subsurface drift toward objectivity consonant with recent developments in other fields, such as genetics and economics.

Beyond that, the book offers no basis for sweeping conclusions. But while documenting the stubborn persistence of repressive attitudes at the governmental level, Kharchev also pointedly, if unwittingly, underscores the transcendent universality of the human condition. For despite the historically conditioned peculiarities of the Soviet system, the essential problems of the Soviet individual and family seem to bear a striking resemblance to those with which the rest of mankind is fated to cope.

ERNST PAWEL, *a new contributor to* COMMENTARY, *is the author of the novels,* The Island in Time, From the Dark Tower, *and* In the Absence of Magic.

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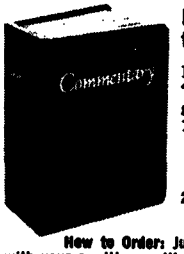

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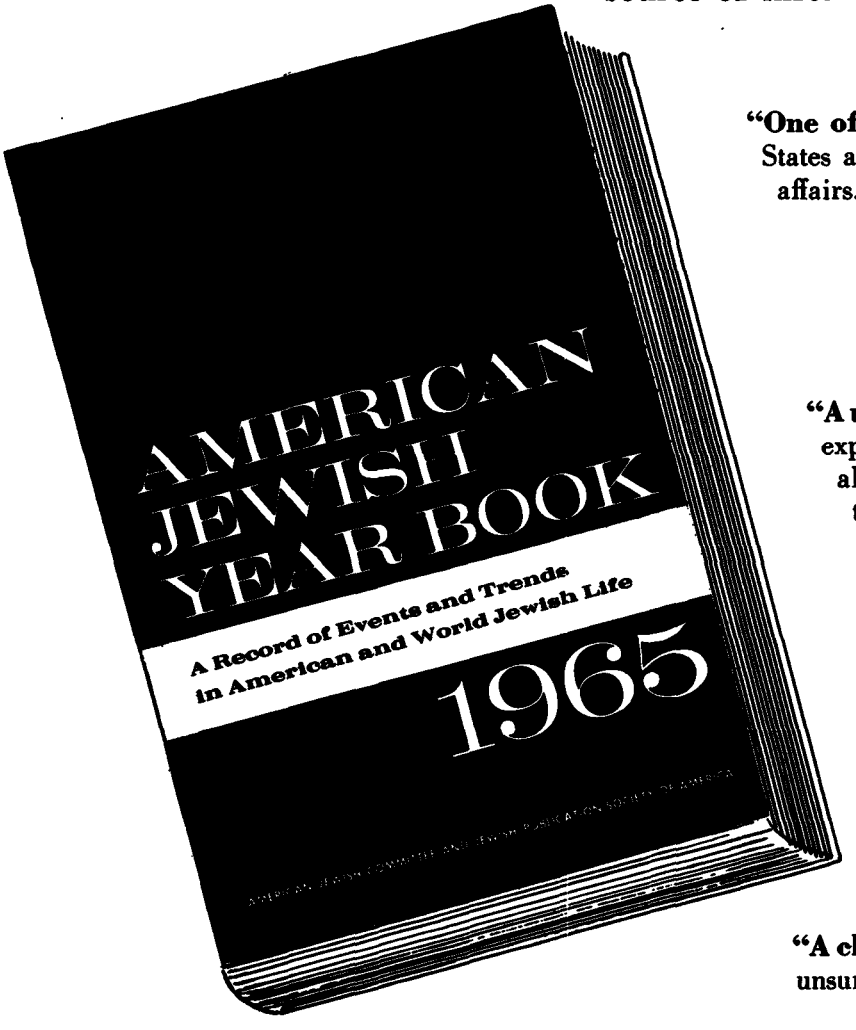

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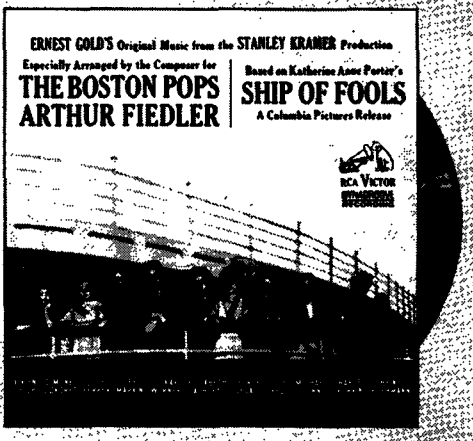
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CHIPPING AWAY

WRITERS AND POLITICS—ESSAYS AND CRITICISM. By CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN. *Pantheon. 259 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER OWEN

"BRITAIN PRESENTS in the United Nations the face of Pecksniff and in Katanga the face of Gradgrind." This pronouncement was one of many equally forthright ones made by Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien in 1961, soon after his term as the United Nations special representative in Elizabethville had come to an end. The aptness of the allusion gave some pleasure: its being made at all by someone actively engaged in the cut-and-thrust of international politics gave even more. Literary people are not usually notable for the way they impinge on public events and, for this reason alone, Dr. O'Brien's career is of special interest.

At his best, Dr. O'Brien is a disarmingly witty and perceptive writer, full of unpredictable quirks and movements. He is a socialist, but his broader political alignment is, as he puts it himself, "incurably liberal." He is anti-capitalist, rather tolerant of the deficiencies of Communism, strongly pro-African nationalism, and tolerant again—sometimes to the point of almost complete permissiveness—of its excesses. His essay, for instance, on last year's Belgian-American rescue operation in the Congo is an imaginative attempt to see it from an African point of view, but it seriously underplays the scale and nature of the atrocities which were taking place around Stanleyville at the time. Dr. O'Brien especially detests anti-Communism, particularly the kind which he designates as "professional"—his relation to his own views is, by implication, disinterested and amateur. He is pugnacious and fond of polemics. In much of what he says there is usually an element of truth, even where it is dramatized or overstated.

He is now about to assume a teaching post at New York University, having worked out the last weeks of a turbulent period as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana. The present collection includes a short account of some of the things which have been happening at the University of Ghana, as well as two addresses he delivered there to staff and students. Together they make up the most important section of the book. Dr. O'Brien's account of the pressures that have been brought to bear on the University is written with great care and in a manner which is untypically temperate. Its effect, together with that of the addresses, is moving, and it reveals a picture of a good man torn by conflicting loyalties.

DR. O'BRIEN'S position in Ghana has been an immensely difficult and delicate one. He has evidently made great—perhaps excessive—efforts to understand the basis of the official criticisms leveled against the University. These have been crudely and violently expressed, and it would be easy, and not so inaccurate, to dismiss them as paranoid and uninformed. Dr. O'Brien has resisted this temptation and looked always to his own house, reminding his students of what they owe to the workers and farmers of Ghana and of the need for the University to adapt itself to the revolution going on outside its walls. The charges are the familiar ones of neo-colonialist subversion. Dr. O'Brien refutes them with dignity and eloquence. He strives not to alienate those elements in the government with whom he has any kind of dialogue, nor to confirm in their prejudices those people in the West who would find any signs of disillusionment—and particularly from him—the cue for expressions of cynical satisfaction. He tries hard to co-operate with the authorities; he tries also to uphold the great liberal platitudes about truth, knowledge, and free inquiry. In the end these apparently have been severely eroded at the University, though perhaps less than they might have been.

The Pecksniff-Gradgrind allusion, as it happens, applies in Ghana too. It would serve, for example, to point the contrast between President Nkrumah's many protestations about academic freedom and what he suffers to take place there. From his tightrope, though, this is not the kind of reference which Dr. O'Brien permits himself to make, for like most of us he is selective about the events and occasions which call for forthrightness. In his introduction, he writes of the "uneven distribution of moral worry" in the attitudes, particularly toward Africa, of many Western liberals, but he is better able to detect this in others than to avoid it completely in himself. The murderers of Lumumba deserve his contumely, but there are no signs of sympathy for the late Mr. J. B. Danquah, in some ways the father of African nationalism in Ghana, who died recently in prison. Alongside Dr. O'Brien's good points, his intelligence and his wit, his generosity of outlook toward unpopular and unfamiliar points of view and toward people of the wrong color, we must set what he himself admits to—"a touch of the propaganda fiend"—an admission which is candid but not completely disarming.

IN THE present volume he moves easily—with and without the fiend—between his two worlds of literature and politics. The reviews, articles, and addresses which make up the book, cover, among other things, aspects of the literature of England, France, and Ireland. There is also a bit of Irish history; a scathing and effective attack on the *New Yorker;* and a few thoughts on contemporary criticism. There follows a section on the cold war, a balanced and, in the end, realistic piece on the workings of the United Nations, and finally a section on the New Africa. The quality of the pieces varies a good deal.

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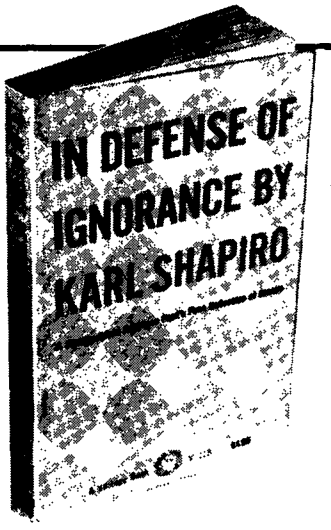

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Some are very slight and some are too evidently written in heat, but several of the critical essays are outstandingly good. Dr. O'Brien sees literary criticism and political analysis as similar activities. The former is concerned with removing the complacencies and prejudices which stand between the reader and the work; the latter with removing the "distortions and misleading facades" which power blocs erect in pursuit of their interest. Dr. O'Brien's criticism, anyway, comes near to fulfilling its aim.

His long review of that short masterpiece of Camus, *The Fall,* is a good example. No political or ideological concerns of his own are allowed to modify the full responsiveness he gives to it. For example:

> What is ruined here is the *morale* of the progressives: most of the capital of the intellectual left has long been rewardingly invested in moral indignation, and now, M. Camus, having transferred his own capital to an unspecified destination, engages in inflationary maneuvers. The shareholders are justifiably incensed.

As I see it, Dr. O'Brien was and is himself one of the shareholders. Like the book's barrister hero, Jean-Baptiste Clamance, before his Fall, he specializes to this day in *"la veuve et l'orphelin"*; the widows and orphans, the deserving cases, not of Paris, but of the world. Dr. O'Brien, too, might be expected to feel incensed at the hopeless and self-punishing quietism of the later Camus. Instead, he admires the book greatly and writes about it with perception and feeling. Whatever its sources, his own capacity for moral and political fervor is not related, as it so often can be, to any serious failure of self-knowledge.

It is possible that, out of its context, the quotation I have made from Dr. O'Brien's essay on Camus gives the impression that, as a critic, he likes formulations, the reduction of literature to its thesis. This is not so. He is sensitive and attentive to tone and language, as a short note on Hardy's poem on the loss of the Titanic shows. But perhaps the most interesting of all the literary pieces is his essay on the two Irish Ascendancy writers, Somerville and Ross, whose *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.* was twenty years ago to be found on the bookshelves of a great many English middle-class households.

These two Anglo-Irish gentlewomen belonged to that category of "colonials" and "settlers" whom Dr. O'Brien currently detests most. I remember myself reading some of their stories as a child and being struck, in the illustrations, by the contrast between the stately Edwardian ladies on their elegant croquet lawns, and the crazy Irish retainers, red-nosed loons in "low" costume, with whom comic efforts at communication were being attempted. Irish intellectuals nowadays regard Somerville and Ross as patronizing and vulgar writers, who exploited the Irish in true colonial style, for the benefit of an English middle-class readership. Dr. O'Brien destroys this particular prejudice and shows how even the exaggerations in *The Irish R.M.* were related to true perceptions about Ireland and were rooted in Irish life. His excellent quotations from Somerville and Ross show that he is capable of seeing through surface badness, the conventionalities of period and class, to less obvious qualities. It is the exercise of a similar kind of intelligence which enables him to put into a wider perspective the nature and extent of bribery and corruption in developing countries. Questions of style are also relevant here.

IT SHOULD BE clear from this that Dr. O'Brien is capable of some magnanimity but also that he takes some satisfaction in rejecting orthodoxies and in rebuking his own people (in politics, his own side) for their faults. His reasons for doing so are clearly set forth in his Introduction:

> I have not felt any great need to add my amateur efforts to those of the numerous professional critics of Communist practice. My own guess is that the liberation of the Communist world, and of the poor world, from their crude forms of mendacity, will have to proceed from within and the liberation of the Western world from its subtler and perhaps deadlier forms of mendacity will also have to proceed from within. . . . From the other side we can hear a few writers, Poles, Russians, and Hun-

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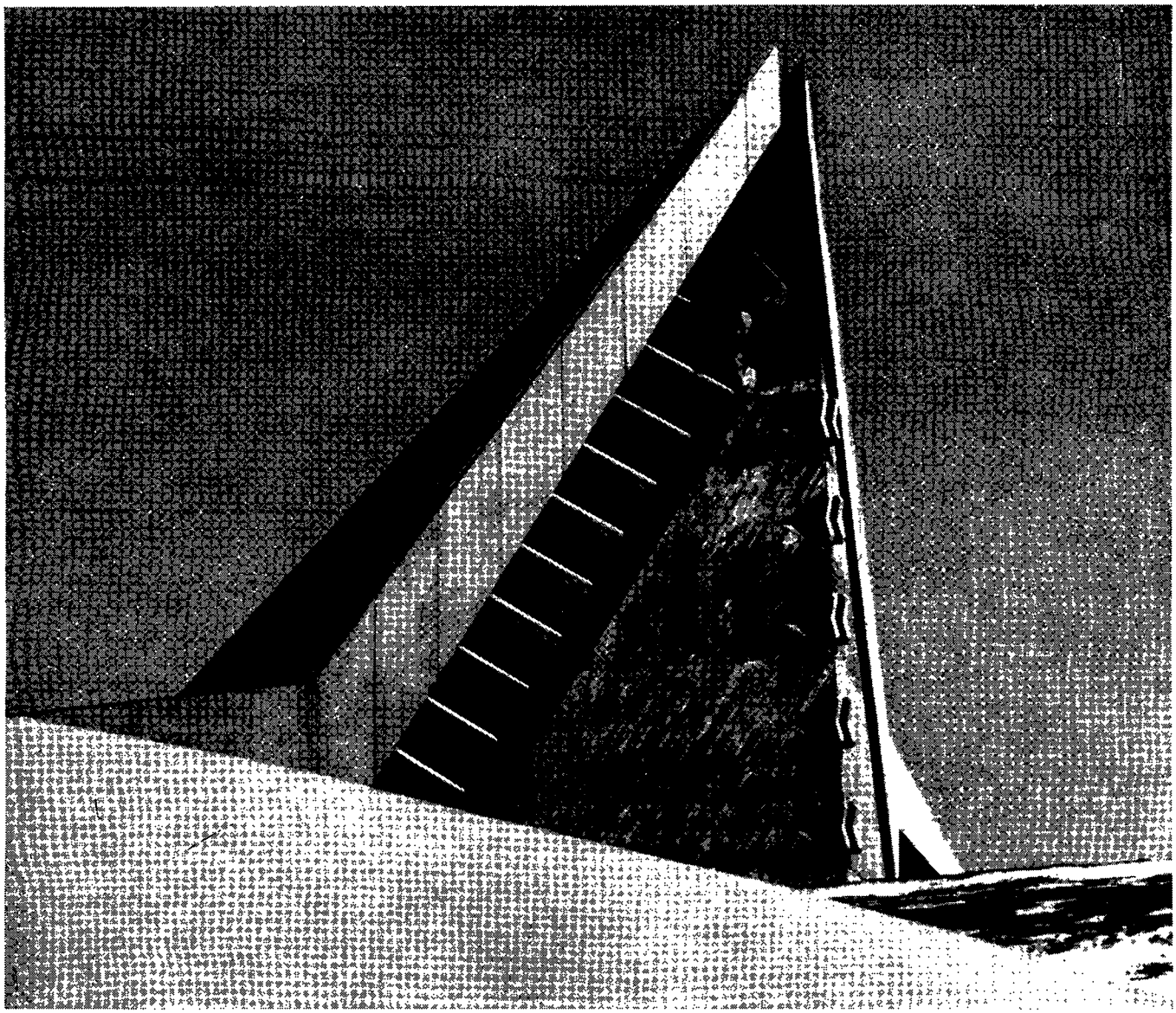

Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle. Psalm XXVIII, Verse II

The vaulting nine-story-high synagogue of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan.

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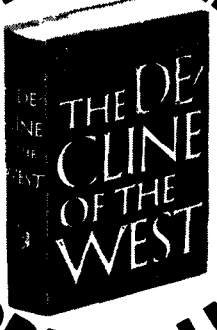

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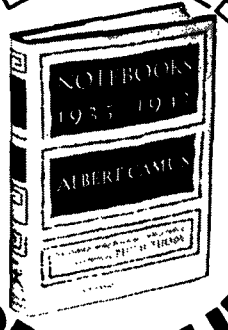

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garians and others busily chipping away. Our applause can neither encourage nor help them. What might help would be that from our side also should be heard the sound of chipping.

Well, there is something to be said for this, though the history of our times does not support the view that crude forms of mendacity are less deadly than any others. Mendacity, crude and subtle, is bad, though subtle mendacity at least tips its hat to this truth. "Physician, heal thyself," the classic liberal precept which underlies the passage, is a useful one as long as the nature of the disease is not exaggerated, as it is in Dr. O'Brien's last sentence. Are the handful of chippers in the East at last to hear a faint, answering, and solitary knock? Dr. O'Brien has been chipping away for years in some important Western journals, and he is not alone. It would be a pity if in his assaults on some imprisoning illusions he overlooked such fortifying truths as this one.

RECONSIDERING GIDE

ANDRÉ GIDE, HIS LIFE AND ART. BY WALLACE FOWLIE. *Macmillan. 217 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by J. G. WEIGHTMAN

THE REPEATED USE of the term "provocative" on the dust-jacket of Mr. Fowlie's new book is puzzling, because there is nothing at all startling in his study of Gide. True, he begins from, and consistently adheres to, the common academic assumption that his subject is a "great man," the details of whose life and work must be treated with reverence, because all the complexities and discrepancies are somehow reconciled in the concept of greatness. Mr. Fowlie dismisses as carping the views of people like Pierre Herbart and "Victor," who have given a hostile account of Gide's character, and he is keen to accept the testimony of such a witness as Jean Schlumberger, who maintained that Gide had painted too black a picture of himself. This pro-Gidean bias may appear provocative to those few critics who, following Aldous Huxley, dismiss Gide as "a *faux grand homme*," but within the context of contemporary French studies it is quite conformist. Gide may not be the handbook for the young that he was in the France of the 30's—literature itself, perhaps, has ceased to be the seminal force it was in those passionate years—but most of the comments made on him since his death have been favorable. There is no longer any need to defend him against the criticisms of Paul Claudel or Henri Massis or François Mauriac; Sartre and Camus spoke up for him, and even Mauriac has revealed in his recent book on de Gaulle that the General himself, on returning to France after the Liberation, inquired most solicitously after Gide. Some of Gide's novels have now come out as paperbacks. And, above all, most of the principles he represented, or was thought to represent—sexual freedom, including the right to be homosexual, the total expression of the personality, religious sensibility without the acceptance of dogmatic belief—are now part of the everyday cultural pattern. In fact, the danger of his position as a *maître à penser* is that he may seem outdated because his battles have been won, while the precariousness of his position as an artist is that the aesthetic framework of his compositions may seem inadequate, once his "message" has been accepted.

As Mr. Fowlie rightly says, Gide's "experimentations . . . were the efforts of a twentieth century humanist to discover who he was and therefore who man is." In other words, his books were exploratory acts in his process of living, and the critical problem is to discover what value they can have for new generations that they can neither surprise nor shock. I find Mr. Fowlie rather disappointing on this central issue. He describes but he does not really discuss. He summarizes the contents of the books, defines their place in the context of Gide's life, refers to what various critics have said about them, but when it comes to the point he appears to have no definite opinions of his own, except vague approbation tinged with curious contradictions.

Why does he say, for instance,

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on page 141, that Gide's autobiography, *Si le grain ne meurt* ("If It Die"), "seems almost embarrassingly indiscreet"? If a writer is by definition a confessionalist who sets out to describe himself as a specimen of humanity, how can he possibly be too indiscreet? As I shall argue in a moment, Gide, if anything, is not indiscreet enough. Further, Mr. Fowlie says, on page 140: "From the *Journal*, Gide's life seems uneventful and even monotonous," while on page 176 he declares: "His work luminously reflects all the passionate interests of his life." Either the *Journal*, which is an important part of Gide's work and indeed the bulkiest, reflects his passionate interests or it does not. Mr. Fowlie's approximate phrasing sometimes complicates still further Gide's already considerable complications.

IT IS DIFFICULT, of course, for those of us who were students of French just before the war to see Gide in perspective, because he was so much a part of the climate in which we grew up. I don't know how old Mr. Fowlie is but I imagine he is about the same age as myself, and therefore I sympathize with his uncertainties. Having recently had to reread Gide's complete works for teaching purposes, I am rather at a loss to decide, for instance, how far he was a genuine liberator committing himself in a vital way at each step and working out a valid doctrine of individualism, and how far he was a cultured but egocentric bourgeois *rentier* trying both to have his cake and eat it, i.e., to combine the habits of the rich with a genuine social conscience, and high-mindedness about marriage with a taste for little boys. I am as prejudiced in his favor as Mr. Fowlie, because at the stage when one needs a liberator I found him more subtle and intelligent than D. H. Lawrence. But now I suspect *L'Immoraliste* ("The Immoralist") and *Les Caves du Vatican* ("Lafcadio's Adventures") of being, to some extent, silly and cruel books. In the first, admittedly, Gide himself is putting the question: "Am I right to enjoy myself with little Arab boys, thus killing my wife emotionally?" and it is not every husband with outside interests who goes to the trouble of writing a novel to ask himself such a moral question. However, in spite of the title, *L'Immoraliste*, Gide is composing the book to provide himself with the answer, yes, because he surrounds his hero, Michel, with an atmosphere of approbation. There is something insufferably smug about the tone of the book. Nor does Gide appear to see clearly, either in this story or in his other writings about little Arab boys, that he is a rich European encouraging homosexual prostitution in an underdeveloped country. It may be that such prostitution is a useful, blameless, and even educational part of the tourist industry; I would not like to prejudge the issue. All I am saying is that there is an issue, and it is one that a moralizing writer should take cognizance of, without pulling any poetic wool over his own, or the reader's, eyes. Gide's delicately lyrical style is sometimes used to dress up matters that might appear less savory if translated into colloquial language.

Only on the religious question does Gide seem to me to arrive at a clear attitude. He eventually rejected belief in any revealed religion and his old age was as serene in this respect as that of David Hume or Paul Valéry. In some other connections, his contradictions do not proceed so much from a protean richness of possibilities as from genuine confusion and from the fact that a late 19th-century *rentier* could dabble in a great many things without fully accepting their consequences, because his financial independence always ensured him a safe line of retreat. The best and most significant part of *L'Immoraliste*, I now think, is the beautiful description of how Michel, back home on his Normandy estate, gets a thrill out of poaching his own game with the local bad lad and then, when his behavior is discovered by his conscientious steward, sells the estate in disgust. This has a ring of truth and, at the same time, is profoundly silly, but I don't think Gide is fully conscious of the silliness, any more than he is when, in the same book, he preaches *dénuement* (bareness of living) on a pri-

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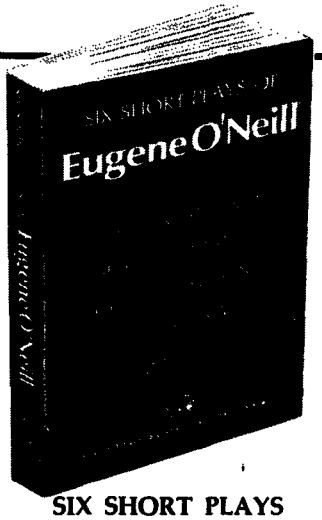

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vate income. He wants us to admire the splendidly diabolical Ménalque as an example of *dénuement* because that gentleman has disencumbered himself of his worldly possessions, has put his money in the bank, and is roughing it in a hotel suite with only a few precious Oriental carpets and choice bottles of Tokay around him to relieve the nakedness of his condition.

Even on the subject of homosexuality, Gide's ideas are not easy to follow. He writes at length about the dissociation between love and sexual desire; he "loved" his wife, with whom he never consummated his marriage because, he says, women aroused no sexual appetite in him, and he "desired" a series of boys. (At the same time, he was shocked by sodomy, or so he implies, so that certain taboos operated for him even within the concept of freedom.) But the final, irrevocable break with his wife, which led her to burn all his letters, was caused by his falling in love with one of the boys, Marc Allégret, and going off to England with him. That this was a case of love, and not simply of desire, is clear from the diary entries. Gide does not appear to notice that his practice conflicts with his theory. Then, not so very much later, Gide had a child by the daughter of one of his best friends, and the mother of the child eventually married another of his best friends. About this strange situation I cannot find one word of comment in Gide's writings, although it is exactly the sort of thing one would have expected a confessionalist to expatiate on at length, especially since it appears to contradict a principle for which he was world-famous. Perhaps he did write about it and his comments have been withheld, but why should he be indiscreet about his wife, whom he claimed to love more than anyone else in the world, and discreet about less important people?

In asking these questions, I am not denying Gide's role as a stimulator of individual freedom; I am saying that in his own case there is a great deal of fuss, muddle, and unexpected reticence that has not yet been sorted out. In criticizing *L'Immoraliste*, I am not underestimating the merits of parts of that book or the great virtues of some of his other works. My point is that Mr. Fowlie's study, in spite of its interest as an introduction, still leaves the field wide open for a detailed, provocative, and critical treatment of Gide's life and art.

AFTER THE FALL

THE GOLDWATER CAPER. By RICHARD H. ROVERE. *Harcourt, Brace & World. 182 pp. $3.95.*

THE AGONY OF THE G.O.P.: 1964. By ROBERT D. NOVAK. *Macmillan. 469 pp. $6.95.*

THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY. By ROBERT J. DONOVAN. *New American Library. 139 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by ANDREW HACKER

WAS IT really a "caper," Mr. Rovere? Even from the distance of a full year it hardly seems that way: September and October of 1964 were pretty grim months. We crossed our fingers, uttered small prayers, and saw just a few too many Goldwater-Miller bumper stickers passing us on the roads. In the streets and subways we looked at what must surely be Goldwater faces, especially those with hard lines around the mouth. Would these people vote for him? Was there a *chance* he would be elected? The polls said otherwise, of course, but the stakes were high: nuclear buccaneering to defend a vague, Arizonan conception of "freedom"; a go-ahead for sheriffs in Mississippi and Alabama to enforce their own apartheid; an unsettling hardness of heart toward the defenseless ("I don't like to see my taxes paid for children born out of wedlock"). No, Mr. Rovere, it was no joke.

Goldwater lost for the very simple reason that The American Voter, for all his weaknesses, has one redeeming quality. He can size up a candidate: is this man fit to be President of the United States? Most of the time the contenders of both parties pass the test, which all things considered is not a very stiff one. But in 1964 one of them didn't. The voters sensed that Barry Goldwater sim-

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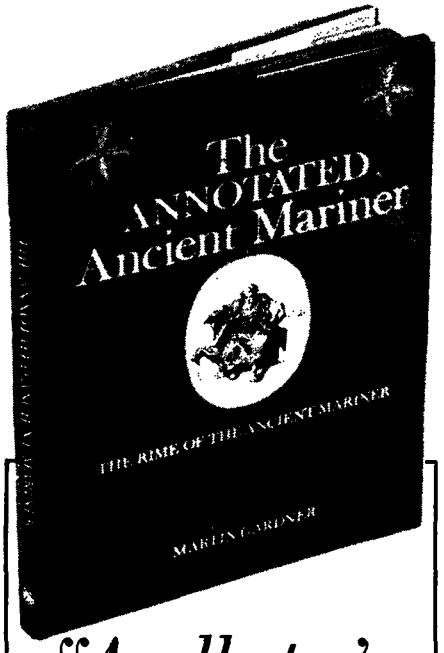

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ply could not handle the job. Not only was he not bright enough, but there was also something—too much—of the irresponsible small boy about him.

The really interesting question is not how Goldwater lost the election but how he won the nomination. The explanation offered by Robert D. Novak is that for eight years Barry had been making the right friends and influencing the important people. Even during the Eisenhower administration he was willing to fly to the remotest Republican enclave to address twenty or thirty regulars at a McKinley Day dinner. He cared. Thus, when the critical time came, he had a tremendous fund of good will in the places and among the people that counted. He didn't have to do well in the primaries. The great majority of Republican delegates are chosen in closed state conventions, where only the party regulars are allowed in the hall. In these conclaves of loyalists, Goldwater was repaid for his attentions. State after state selected delegates, in theory "uninstructed," but in reality mandated to vote for Barry at San Francisco. Novak is at his best depicting this Goldwater pre-revolution: his behind-the-scenes stories of what went on in Oklahoma, Georgia, Kansas, and the state of Washington are particularly revealing.

BUT IS IT accurate to say, as Novak does, that "here was a new breed of delegate, most of whom had never been to a national convention before"? It is true that most of the delegates showing up at San Francisco were new. However this is true of all conventions: delegate turnover is always high. An imaginative Cornell student, Paul Friedman, has found that the 1964 gathering actually had *more* holdovers from 1960 than the four previous conventions had had from those immediately preceding them, and in general, the makeup of the delegations was not radically different from those of earlier years.

Well, what happened then at San Francisco? Scranton was, to be sure, a weak and inept sister. And there was, of course, The Rockefeller Problem. But even if the Scranton-Rockefeller-Romney forces had joined behind their best man prior to the first ballot, and even if they had had someone like Wendell Willkie to pull out of the hat, he would not have gotten the nomination. The delegates wanted Goldwater. And not only because he was Barry, but also because they had been wanting a true-blue conservative since 1932. That they wanted Robert Taft in 1940 and 1944 and 1952 is clear enough. Why, then, given this preference for one of their own, did convention after convention proceed to name a crypto-Democrat: Willkie, Dewey, Eisenhower, Nixon? The answer is that Republican conventions, at least until last summer, must be viewed as chemical rather than mechanical processes. In convention following convention, the delegates entered wanting one type of man and left having nominated another type. The chemistry of it all reveals an interaction of people, power, and persuasion verging on the mystical.

A majority of the delegates at any Republican convention are the loyal and humorless provincials who are the backbone of the party. They represent small-town, small-business, Anglo-Saxon America. For the most part ideological conservatives, they are tremendously impressed with their own initiative, individualism, and moral superiority. ("You are the salt of the earth," the official greeter proclaimed.) When all is said and done, these courthouse lawyers and main-street merchants *are* the Republican party. They mind the store in the off-years and raise the money in the bleak times.

Presidential nominations, however, bring another element onto the Republican scene and into the convention hall. I am not referring here to the suburban middle-class: even though it often votes Republican, it is never active enough in party circles to get many of its people chosen as delegates. I have in mind the unobtrusive clusters of well-tailored and soft-spoken men who are always to be found at Republican conventions, though most of them have no official status in the party or its proceedings. They are best known as *They*.

They are, of course, the Eastern Establishment: men from Ford

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and General Motors, from Chase Manhattan and Metropolitan Life and Dillon Read and the downtown law firms. *They* are the ones with access to men who write checks in five and six figures. Though often not delegates or party regulars, they have to be listened to. In previous years the Eastern Establishment let it be known that *They* were lining up behind Willkie or Dewey and that Taft was not acceptable. The Establishment has always wanted a man it could feel at ease with: someone who respected rather than suspected Wall Street in particular and Corporate America in general. (Look where Willkie came from. Look where Dewey and Nixon have ended up.) So the doughty delegates from Ohio and Nebraska and Montana downed their personal preferences and found themselves doing the Establishment's bidding. It was a painful accommodation. It was hard to explain to the folks back in Butte.

1964 WAS THE revolt of the regulars. San Francisco was the first "democratic" Republican convention in a generation, the first in which the delegates went ahead and nominated the man they really wanted. So what if he stood only the slightest chance of winning in November? At last, at long last, our party belongs to us. The provincial conservative is neither a Birchite nor a bigot. But all things considered, he prefers his party to be a club, fairly exclusive in membership and somewhat discriminating in those to whom it makes its appeal. This attitude may not win many elections. But then winning elections is not the whole point.

Robert Donovan, like many commentators, seems to think that the Republicans really want to capture the Presidency. Hence his unsurprising, facile advice: "The first task," he admonishes the party, "is to bring back the millions of Republicans who voted for Johnson . . ., at the same time managing to hold the millions who favored the nomination of Goldwater." But if the 1964 Republican delegates nominated a candidate with a small and diminishing constituency (we are not, any longer, a nation of small-town small-businessmen), they did so with their eyes at least partially open. For the Republicans can afford to be the No. 2 party for reasons that the Democrats cannot. The Democrats are the hungrier party, more needful of public office for reasons of social status and political patronage. When you come down to it, we Republicans (my true colors, I must confess) own and run most of the country. We have the better jobs, the higher incomes, and the more respectable niches in society compared with our Democratic opponents. We look to our ascending careers, not to governmental programs, for our personal advancement and betterment. And while it is nice to have one of our own kind in public office, we do not experience any great feeling of discomfort when we are governed by Democrats. The Republican party, then, can be the party of opposition for the next decade and perhaps longer. Rovere, Novak, and Donovan all suggest that we ought to worry about this. The trouble—if you want to call it that—is that most Republicans are happily buying their 1965 cars, planning their next summer trips, and watching their investments rise. The advice directed at the Republicans comes either from Democrats or the party's own liberal wing. But most members of the Grand Old Party have more interesting and important things to do then to worry themselves unduly about politics.

THE PERSON OF JESUS

WE JEWS AND JESUS. By SAMUEL SANDMEL. *Oxford University Press. 164 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by PAUL WINTER

IT HAS BEEN said that the person of Jesus unites Christians and Jews, and that their different concepts of Jesus divide them. To clarify the borderlines between the two communities, without exacerbating differences, and to state his own position, Rabbi Sandmel, Provost of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, has written an attractive book, informative yet unpolemical, forthright but courteous. Intended

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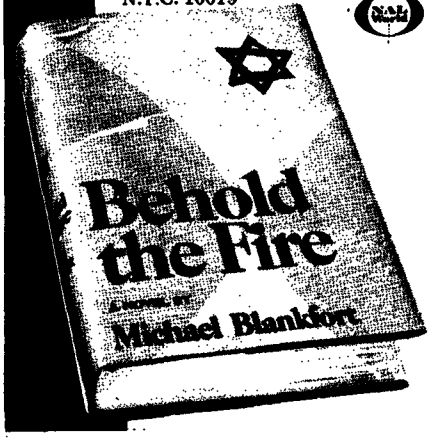

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for people who are anxious for information, Sandmel's book demands no preparatory study, and can be understood without much difficulty by anyone who reads it with an open mind, be he Jew or Christian.

Simple as this sounds, the task which Sandmel undertook is not an easy one. Can anyone say that he is open-minded about "Jews and Jesus"? When the subject is approached, Jews are at once struck by the paradox of the intense Jewishness of the Galilean preacher and of various Christian attitudes of enmity toward Jews throughout the ages. Christians are no less bewildered by the incongruity (so it seems to them) of the same Jewishness of Jesus and the Jews' rejection of the Christian claim. To answer the objections raised by the two parties in one book is a difficult task, but Sandmel has to a considerable degree accomplished it. In showing "where Jews can reasonably stand with respect to Jesus," his emphasis is on the word "reasonably." There are still Jews—and Rabbi Sandmel knows this—who become psychotic when the name "Jesus" is mentioned in their hearing. The springs of their reaction are psychologically understandable. Yet there is no more sense in blaming Jesus for the agelong persecution of Jews by Christians than there would be in blaming Christopher Columbus for the policies of the United States State Department. As Jews, we have to come to terms with Jesus, who belongs to our history, no less than we have to come to terms with Christianity as part of the environment in which we live.

In the first four chapters of his book, Sandmel deals with historical questions. Briefly, politely, yet uncompromisingly, he traces in his Introduction the antagonism between Christian and Jewish attitudes about Jesus and about each other, and cautiously expresses his view that these ancient conflicts are a relic belonging now to the past. The next chapter is a discussion of the Jewish roots of Christianity, and the third is an exposition of "The Divine Christ," that is, the concept of Jesus as mirrored in the earliest Christian writings, the letters of the Apostle Paul. The following chapter, the most extensive one in Sandmel's book, is devoted to "Jesus the man," in the course of which Sandmel provides an outline of New Testament scholarship from about 1835 to about 1925.

BY RELIGIOUS conviction, Rabbi Sandmel is a member of the Reform Synagogue; in terms of New Testament scholarship he must be classed as a conservative. His patent dislike of the *form-critical* approach to biblical studies, his adherence to the view that the writer of the Lucan Gospel was acquainted with, and used, the Gospel according to Matthew when he wrote his own, and most of all his conspicuous silence about trends in recent research (not in Europe only, but elsewhere in the Western hemisphere) reveal his sympathies and his aversions. The Jewish, or the Christian, reader will obtain from this chapter a well-informed and very lucid account of the work done by David Friedrich Strauss and Ernest Renan, by Heinrich Graetz and Abraham Geiger, by Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer, by Claude Goldsmid Montefiore and Joseph Klausner (of whom Sandmel is outspokenly critical), but will learn little of the issues with which scholars of our own time are concerned. Thus, he may receive only a fractional view of what New Testament scholarship is about. Even allowing for the fact that Rabbi Sandmel writes for laymen, the account he gives in the fourth chapter of his book is much too "modest" and evokes an unrealistic picture of the aims of biblical scholarship by its very insistence on "history." Christian scholarship is not concerned with just establishing what is "true" about Jesus in the factual sense. It does not ask how many gallons of water were displaced when Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee, or how many calories the two loaves of bread, which fed 5,000 people, contained. After reading Sandmel's book, there is some danger that Jewish readers, unfamiliar with the subject, may think Christians more naïve than they are. Thoughtful Christians are aware that the Gospels are not biographies of Jesus in the ordinary sense, but proclamations of faith in the resurrected Christ. Such historical recollections of the life of Jesus as the Gospels contain are deeply embedded in the profession of the Easter faith.

Conservative in his attitude to the stand taken by New Testament scholars of the last forty years, Sandmel is, though, in some places unduly skeptical with regard to the New Testament narratives as such. For instance, he refers to the evangelists' descriptions of Jesus's baptism at the hands of John as "an embellished account" (p. 120) and is inclined to dismiss the whole story as "a fiction" (p. 121). The evangelists' embellishments of scene and performance are obvious—yet the fact that the evangelists felt compelled to gloss over what originally may have been "a simple statement, bare and laconic, that Jesus had been baptized by John" betrays the writers' uneasiness in having to report an event, or an act on Jesus's part, which—taken by itself—signified remorse and the urge to obtain forgiveness of sins. Jesus's submission to John's baptism is one of the few facts of his life where doubt of historicity is unreasonable. There are other places in this book where Sandmel remains unnecessarily reserved, as for instance in his reference to the Josephus passage about Jesus. Contrary to what Sandmel says (p. 18), Church Fathers of the 3rd and 4th centuries did mention the Josephus passage and quoted it. Of course, this does not prove that the passage, as it stands, is authentic. One of the early witnesses to Josephus's text, Origen (*Against Celsus* I 47, II 13; *Commentary on Matthew* X 17), apparently had before him a reading which differed from the text known to and quoted by Eusebius (*Church History* I 11), a text manifestly in existence already by the time Origen wrote. This suggests that an analysis be made so as to determine what Josephus himself actually wrote or could have written.

TOWARD THE END of his book, Sandmel leaves the field of history and deals with topical problems: "The Jewish Reader and the Gospels" and "Toward a Jewish Attitude to Christianity." Sandmel never allows the reader any doubts as to his own position. Without a

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OBSCENE

In the spring of 1962 a young New York publisher named Ralph Ginzburg brought out an elegant new magazine "devoted to the joys of love and sex." Its name was *Eros*. *Eros* was a lavishly printed, hardcover quarterly featuring such long-suppressed masterpieces of art and literature as John Cleland's *Fanny Hill*, Frank Harris's *My Life and Loves*, Mark Twain's *1601*, Robert Burns's *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, and Edgar Degas's magnificent monotypes for Guy de Maupassant's *Madame Tellier's Brothel*.

Eros was a great and instantaneous success. Art and literary critics all across the country hailed it as a welcome addition to the literature of our time ("It will probably become a status symbol on the coffee tables of our society," said the San Francisco *Chronicle*) and nearly 150,000 Americans purchased subscriptions, despite the fact that its $25-per-year price made it the world's most expensive magazine.

But while *Eros* was kindling the enthusiasm of intellectuals, it was also arousing the deep anxiety of prudes, and it was not long before censors began trying to suppress the magazine. In December, 1962, the Post Office Department hauled Ginzburg into the United States District Court in Philadelphia and charged him with criminal use of the United States mail on grounds that *Eros* was "obscene."

A trial followed in which more than 70 leaders in the arts and sciences (including Dr. Theodor Reik, Dwight Macdonald, and Nobel Prize-winner Dr. Hermann J. Muller) rallied to Ginzburg's defense. Nevertheless, a Federal judge, sitting without a jury, ruled *Eros* obscene and fined Ginzburg $28,000 and sentenced him to five years in prison. The case is now on appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

Although the *Eros* trial resulted in one of the most dramatic courtroom battles of the century and although the issues it raised rival those of the Scopes Trial, virtually nothing was printed about the case in the American press.

Now, however, the full story of the *Eros* trial will be told, and it will be told by its protagonist, Ralph Ginzburg, in a taut, book-length (35,000-word) narrative entitled "*Eros* on Trial." In it, Mr. Ginzburg reveals which top Government officials made the decision to put *Eros* out of business, why the Post Office selected Philadelphia as the arena for the trial, and why the Supreme Court, in deciding the *Eros* case, may hand down a landmark decision declaring all obscenity statutes unconstitutional and therefore null and void forever. (Mr. Ginzburg's Supreme Court appeal is being supported by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Authors League of America, and 111 leading American artists and intellectuals, including August Heckscher, James Jones, Arthur Miller, Otto Preminger, Elmer Rice, Dore Schary, Mark Schorer, Irwin Shaw, William Styron, Louis Untermeyer, Mark Van Doren, Robert Penn Warren, Sloan Wilson, the curator emeritus of the American Museum of Natural History, and the executive director of the American Humanist Association.)

This moving, suspenseful account of the *Eros* trial—it may well become a classic in the literature of Free Speech—will be published in FACT Magazine as part of a special *Eros* Commemorative Issue. FACT will also present portions of the *Eros* trial transcript (they will *astound* you) and a special section entitled "The Most Beautiful Art from *Eros*." This portfolio of artwork contains reprints of 59 pages of *Eros*'s magnificent paintings, drawings, photographs, poetry, and prose. Included are spreads from "The Erotic Sculpture of India," "The Brothel in Art," "Love in the Bible," "Nudes of Yesterday," "The Love Life of Napoleon," "The Animal Love Poems of D. H. Lawrence," and *Eros*'s memorable photographs of the late Marilyn Monroe by Bert Stern.

This special *Eros* Commemorative Issue of FACT is being offered *absolutely free* to all new subscribers to FACT Magazine (a detailed description of FACT appears below). To obtain your copy of this special *Eros* issue and to enter your FACT subscription, simply fill out the coupon below and mail it with $7.50 to FACT, 110 W. 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018. Since this special *Eros* issue is bound to become a collector's item, we urge you to act at once.

A few facts about FACT: FACT is a new national bimonthly which specializes in publishing information which has been suppressed by American newspapers, magazines, and TV networks. FACT ranges over Science, Business, Law, History, Communications, Government, Foreign Affairs, and the Arts.

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hint of arrogance, he writes with a calm, sober dignity, stressing his Jewishness even in such minor matters as using the term *"Tanakh"* instead of "Old Testament." Yet his pronounced Jewishness does not prevent him from a fair assessment of the moral values that lie in Christianity. He is equally free from the pathological aversion with which some Jews traditionally regard Jesus and from the false romanticism that characterizes the works of certain Jewish novelists when they write of the man from Nazareth. There is an appealing charm in Provost Sandmel's simple, unpretentious writing that comes from the directness of his approach, one which enables him to recall the fate of his parents who had to flee from Eastern Europe, and to inform his readers that his sons now use an Episcopal church building as their scout headquarters. By virtue of his personal tone as well as of his ideas, Sandmel argues eloquently for the possibilities of better understanding and better relations between Jews and Christians, without either of them sacrificing the beliefs they individually hold. This is an honest book, a serious book, one that has great educational value.

ATLANTICISM

AFTER TWENTY YEARS: ALTERNATIVES TO THE COLD WAR IN EUROPE. By RICHARD J. BARNET and MARCUS G. RASKIN. *Random House. 243 pp. $5.95.*

THE TROUBLED PARTNERSHIP: A REAPPRAISAL OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. By HENRY A. KISSINGER. *McGraw-Hill. 266 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by PAUL JOHNSON

I CANNOT remember any time since its formation in 1949 when the Atlantic Alliance was not said to be passing through a crisis. For a long time, this "crisis" centered around the vexed problem of German rearmament and the various formulae which might be devised to permit it, while providing guarantees against a return to German militarism. Then the "crisis" shifted to the reluctance of the European nations to produce the minimum number of ground forces which the NATO supreme command regarded as essential. Now we have two concurrent "crises": how to allow the Germans a share in nuclear weapons policy without actually giving them a finger on the trigger; and how to reconcile the very existence and functioning of NATO with General de Gaulle's desire that American influence in Europe should be greatly diminished, if not eliminated entirely.

THESE TWO sober and well-argued books take the present "crises" very seriously indeed, and display much anxious cogitation about their solution. I cannot honestly say that either quite succeeds, though both contain several original suggestions, particularly about arms-control schemes, and much valuable information. Messrs. Barnet and Raskin analyze the cost of America's military commitment to Europe and argue forcefully that much of it is now irrelevant. The cold war in Europe is ending, and the region of peril to Western interests has shifted to the underdeveloped areas of the world, where the U.S. effort is comparatively small. It is feasible, they say, to devise a scheme for the control and limitation of nuclear weapons in Europe which would be compatible with both U.S. and Soviet interests; moreover such a scheme would make a German settlement—which is central to any real reduction of tension in the European theater—far more likely, since it is the Soviet fear of a nuclear-armed Germany which is the real obstacle to reunification. As to the ambitions of France, these are the inevitable consequence of the social and economic recovery of Western Europe, and the United States must adjust herself to them.

Mr. Kissinger's analysis is more orthodox in tone, and imbued with what might be termed the conventional wisdom of the Atlantic Alliance. This makes him, in some respects, much more pessimistic. He is perhaps more aware of the real difficulties which confront any scheme, no matter how ingenious, to settle the problem of German reunification (which he, also, recognizes is the key to everything)

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and though he does, in fact, put forward a number of detailed suggestions, I doubt if he is really convinced of their feasibility himself. On the contrary, he says flatly, "it is improbable that any negotiating formula will advance German unity," and he adds the shrewd point that the present Franco-American rivalry has the practical result that "each ally is tempted to add the Federal Republic to its side by holding out vague hopes and grandiose schemes for the achievement of Germany's maximum objectives"—and this inevitably, by aggravating Soviet fears, pushes reunification still further into the future.

BOTH THESE BOOKS, then, provide useful and thoughtful surveys of the problems which currently confront Western political planners. They by no means agree in their findings, but have the merit of complementing each other neatly. Where both, however, are much less satisfactory is in the solutions they feel obliged to put forward. Here, the sharp analysis degenerates into vagueness and, in Mr. Kissinger's case, verbosity:

> History is the tale of civilizations that sought their future in their past. There are no plateaus in international affairs; what is not a stepping stone soon becomes the beginning of a decline. Succeeding generations will not be able to draw comfort from the fact that an unmet challenge was produced by great achievement.

This, to me, carried echoes of the inflated rhetoric of Lyndon B. Johnson, an impression confirmed when Mr. Kissinger finds himself using expressions like "travail" and "erstwhile," and even, so help us, "the well-springs of creativity," which, needless to say, have "run dry." Some of his concluding sentences are quite simply unacceptable:

> The opportunity is great. The dynamic periods of Western history occurred when unity was forged from diversity.

But, surely, as R. H. Tawney and Max Weber showed, the beginnings of Europe's economic "take-off" not only coincided with but to some extent were promoted by its division into hostile Protestant and Catholic camps. Mr. Kissinger continues:

> This is the task again. The struggles for prestige and influence can be salutary if at some point they lead to a heightened sense of community.

Why should they? Are they not more likely to have the opposite effect?

Indeed, on the last page, Mr. Kissinger makes very little sense at all:

> When technique becomes exalted over purpose, men become the victims of their complexities. They forget that every great achievement in every field was a vision before it became a reality. . . . The West requires nothing so much as men able to create their own reality.

I suppose what Mr. Kissinger is really saying is that, despite the evidence, the West must have faith in its future; but this is really no more helpful than condemning sin as wicked. The prose of Messrs. Barnet and Raskin is by no means so open to the charge of oratorical breathlessness; but it, too, descends into platitude toward the end:

> The obstacle to a rational world society is not the Soviet Union nor China, nor the United States. It is man—his greed, his will to power, and his destructive impulses. . . . Perhaps a growing awareness that his problems are too vast for either a parochial community or a parochial ideology may help man to come to terms with his trembling existence.

But this is not much comfort in a year which has seen the United Nations virtually cease to function.

I THINK the authors of both these books would have saved themselves from such terminal lapses if they had resisted the temptation to devise apocalyptic solutions. And this brings me back to my original point about the "permanent crisis" of the Atlantic Alliance. Is it not wrong to talk in terms of "crisis"? For to do so implies a desire and need to return to NATO's pristine virtue of 1949, when the issues were clear-cut and the allies

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were forced to dissolve their differences in the face of a very real possibility of a Soviet occupation of Western Europe. Who, today, believes the Russians have the slightest intention of invading West Germany or France? And, if this is so, is it not both inevitable *and desirable* that the Alliance should become looser and its members more diverse in their aims? An alliance, after all, is an artifact, designed for a specific purpose; if the purpose is accomplished, there is no sense in prolonging its existence artificially, still less in trying to transform it into a community for which there is no apparent public demand. Naturally, among the men who control and administer NATO there is a certain vested interest; an understandable feeling that the Alliance is an end in itself, with a life of its own which must develop and mature with the infusion of new ideas. But is there any reason why the rest of us should share this occupational prejudice?

Much of the confusion in which these two books ultimately plunge themselves springs from the touching, but quite baseless, belief that national self-interest can, and eventually will, wither away. Why should it—any more than the Marxist state? Surely the art of politics, in international as well as domestic affairs, is based on accepting the existence of interests and devising means whereby they can be reconciled in a civilized manner. President Johnson recently demonstrated his failure to grasp this fundamental truth when, by courtesy of the new Early Bird satellite, he lectured General de Gaulle and the French nation for pursuing what he termed a narrow, outmoded form of nationalism; while, at that very moment, United States marines were being landed in the Dominican Republic in the defense of what appeared to most Frenchmen (and many others) to be American national interests conceived in the narrowest possible sense. The truth is, of course, that national self-interest is a very subjective thing, easily rationalized, by the man or nation which pursues it, into a specious form of internationalism. When de Gaulle vetoed Britain's entry into the Common Market, he doubtless had no difficulty in convincing himself that he was acting in the wider interests of the European community as a whole—and, for that matter, in Britain's own. When Lyndon Johnson ordered U.S. marines to land in Santo Domingo, he clearly persuaded himself that he was furthering the interests of the entire hemisphere. Would it not be more honest, and conducive to clear thinking, to admit publicly that nations are most unlikely to place communal objectives above their own, and to plan international schemes of cooperation accordingly?

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

ROGER OWEN *is an educational adviser to the BBC. Mr. Owen lived for some years in Africa and frequently writes about its politics and culture.*

J. G. WEIGHTMAN, *who teaches French Literature at King's College, London, reviewed César Graña's* Bohemian versus Bourgeois *in our September 1964 issue.*

ANDREW HACKER *is a member of the Government department at Cornell University and the author of* Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science. *His last previous contribution to* COMMENTARY *was a review of Jacob Javits's* Order of Battle: A Republican's Call to Reason.

PAUL WINTER *is the author of* On the Trial of Jesus, *and of many articles in scholarly periodicals. His essay, "The Trial of Jesus" appeared in our September 1964 issue.*

PAUL JOHNSON, *editor of the* New Statesman, *here makes his first appearance in* COMMENTARY.

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